

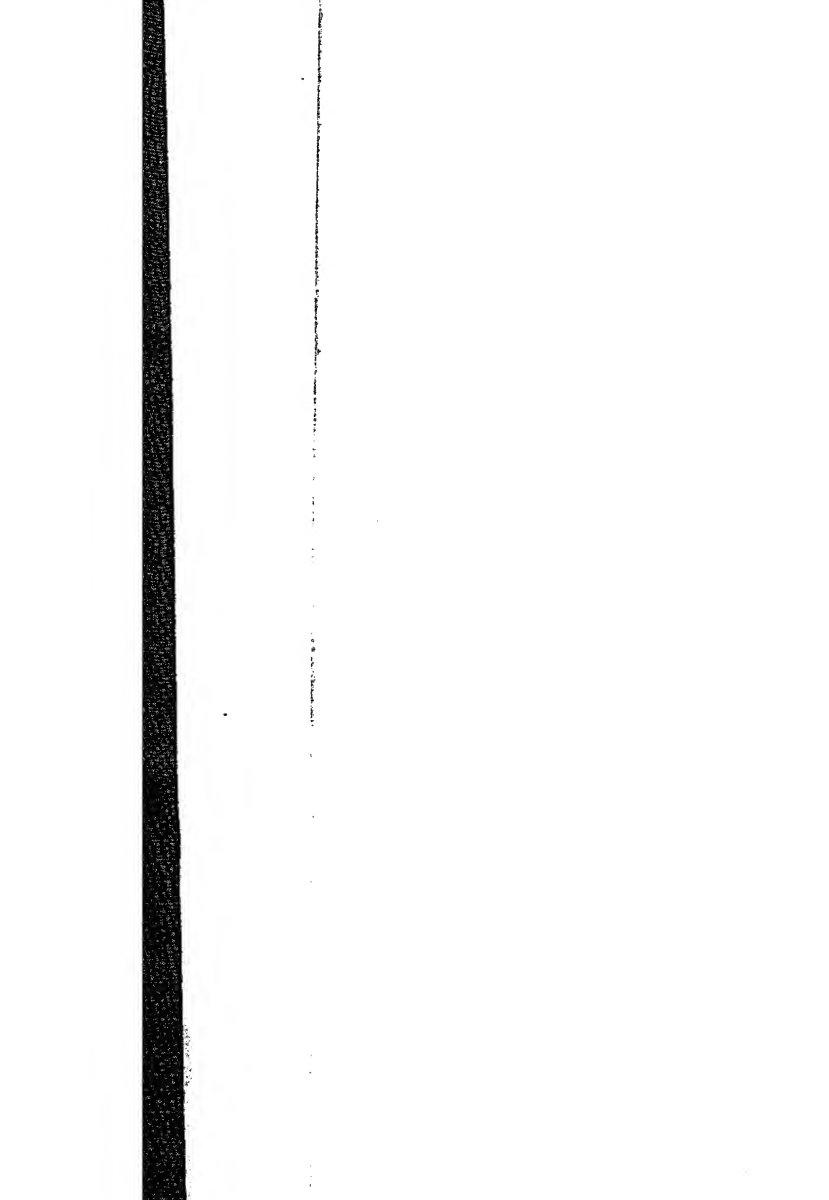
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AND  
NATIONAL REVIVAL

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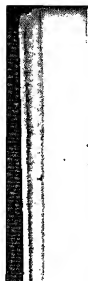
# WILLIAM AND NATIONAL R

BY  
J. HOLLAND ROSE,

A tact  
Did steer humanity; but you, gods,  
Some faults to make us men.

SHAKESPEARE, *Antony and Cleopatra*





## PREFACE

**I**N this volume I seek to describe the work of the great statesman, and the revival carried out by William Pitt the Younger, from the time of the commencement of his career to the time of the commencement of the French Revolution. France, completing the story in a volume entitled "William Pitt and the French Revolution." No apology is needed for an attempt to give a description of his career. The task has not been done since the year 1862, when the fifth Earl of Rosebery published his monumental work; and at that time the records of the Foreign Office, War Office, Admiralty, and the other offices were not open for research in the present manner. Excellent monographs on Pitt were given by Lord Rosebery and Mr. Charles Whibley in 1891 and 1906, but they were too brief to give an adequate treatment of the man and his career. Of late these have been augmented by the inclusion among the materials of the Pitt Manuscripts, which comprise



## PREFACE

achievements during the period dominated by the influence of Russia, Joseph of Austria, and Mirabeau. The reign of George III. is also memorable for political, fiscal, and social movements of high interest; and I have dealt with them as fully as possible, often with the aid of notes drawn from Pitt's papers. It being impossible within the limits of this work, I ask the forbearance of those who would not treat these problems more fully. This is not a biography, not a series of monographs; and I have where sought to keep the figure of Pitt in the foreground. The New letters of George III., Pitt, Grenville, Burke, Canning, etc., which could only be referred to, will be published in a volume entitled "Pitt and his Contemporaries," containing also essays and notes.

I wish to thank not only those whose generous assistance I have already acknowledged, but also Mr. Hall, of the Public Record Office, for advice and assistance in my researches; the Rev. William Hunt, I. C. S., for a thorough revision of the proofs of this volume; the Masters of Trinity College and Peterhouse, Cambridge; Professor Firth, and Mr. G. P. Gooch, M. A., for suggestions; the Ven. Archdeacon Canning, for assistance on economic subjects; Monsieur Guyot and Herr Doctor Luckwies, for information on French and German affairs; and

at my disposal unpublished correspondence of their ancestors. These new sources have enabled me to reconstruct no small portion of the history of the period.

Among recent publications bearing on the subject the most important is that of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., "Preserved MSS. Comm., 7 vols., 1892-1910," of which comprises details relating to Pitt. This collection, containing the correspondence of George III, Pitt, Lord Grenville, and other statesmen and ambassadors, has proved of invaluable service. The *Memoirs*, both English and foreign, of the period, are late. Among foreign historians the most important of this period, Sorel holds the first place. His narrative is often defective on English history, as he gave too little attention to the English side. Dr. Felix Salomon on the early part of the period (Leipzig, 1901), and those of Luckwaldt, Uhlmann, Vivenot, and others, have been of service, as have also Chassin, and Pallain on Anglo-French relations. Lecky's *History of England* detracts somewhat from the latter part of his work, "Eighteenth Century"; and I have been able to fill in some of the episodes which he treated inadequately.

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## ABBREVIATIONS OF THE TITLES OF THE CHIEF WORKS REFERRED TO IN THIS VOLUME

ANN. REG. = "Annual Register."

ASHBOURNE = "Pitt: some Chapters of his Life and Times,"  
Rt. Hon. Lord Ashbourne. 1898.

AUCKLAND JOURNALS = "The Journal and Corresp. of Lord  
Auckland." 4 vols. 1861.

BUCKINGHAM P. = "Mems. of the Court and Cabinets of George  
by the Duke of Buckingham. 2 vols. 1853.

B.M. ADD. MSS. = Additional Manuscripts of the British Museum.

BEAUFORT P. = "MSS. of the Duke of Beaufort," etc.  
Comm.). 1891.

CAMPBELL. = "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," by Lord  
8 vols. 1845-69.

CASTLEREAGH CORRESP. = "Mems. and Corresp. of Viscount  
reagh." 8 vols. 1848-50.

COUNTRESS MSS. = Manuscripts of the Countess of

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

WILLIAM PITT AS CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER  
(From a painting by Gainsborough  
of R. A. Tatton, Esq.). . . . .

LADY CHATHAM, MOTHER OF WILLIAM PITT  
painting in the possession of  
M.P.) . . . . .

WILLIAM WYNDHAM, LORD GRENVILLE  
painting by Hoppner). . . . .

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE. (From a  
painting by Sir T. Lawrence) . . . . .

# THE LIFE AND WILLIAM

INTRODUCTION

ENGLAND AT THE CLOSE OF  
WAR (1780-3)

I think it proper before I commence my review the condition of the capital, the temper of the provinces, and the elements of weakness throughout the whole Empire, so that we may with the vicissitudes and turns of events, which but also with their relations and causes. (FAC)

IN the course of the session of 1782, I was dragging to its disastrous Ministers was imminent, one of the ye House of Commons declared that he ordinate officer in a new administration during a crisis of singular intensity, he the Crown and thenceforth with one

## xii      ABBREVIATIONS OF T

- LEEDS MEM. = "Political Memoranda of France,"  
ed. by Mr. O. Browning. 1884.
- MALMESBURY DIARIES = "Diaries and Correspondence of the Duke of Malmesbury." 4 vols. 1844.
- PARL. HIST. = "History of the Parliaments of Great Britain," continued in Hansard).
- PELLEW = "Life and Corresp. of the first Lord of the Admiralty, Rev. C. Pellew. 3 vols. 1847.
- PITT MSS. = Pitt MSS., preserved at H.M. College, Cambridge.
- PITT-RUTLAND CORRESP. = "Corresp. between Pitt and the Duke of Rutland." 1890.
- ROSE G., "DIARIES" = "Diaries and Correspondence of George Rose." 2 vols. 1860.
- ROSE, "NAPOLEON" = "Life of Napoleon," by George Rose.
- RUTLAND P. = "MSS. of the Duke of Rutland." 3 vols. 1894.
- RUVILLE = "William Pitt, Earl of Chatham," (transl.). 3 vols. 1907.
- SOREL = "L'Europe et la Révolution française," by J. P. Moreau de la Rochette. 1889, 1897.
- STANHOPE = "Life of . . . William Pitt," by John Stanhope. 3rd edition. 1867.
- SYBEL = "Geschichte der Revolutionzeit" (1789-1806). 4 vols. 1867-9.
- VIVENOT = "Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution des Reichs . . ." von A. von Vivenot. 1873.
- WITTICHEN = "Preussen und England in der ersten Hälfte des 18ten Jahrhunderts," von F. K. Wittichen. 1902.
- WRAXALL = "Memoirs of Sir N. W. Wraxall." 1828.



Independence, and for the publication of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations." In 1779 the Lancashire weaver, Crompton, introduced his "mule jenny," a vast improvement on the mule and the spinning wheel of Hargreaves. The year 1785 witnessed the Diamond-Necklace scandal, so fatal to the prestige of the monarchy, but also the patenting of Watt's double-acting steam engine and Cartwright's "power loom." In the year 1789 sounded the knell of the old order of things on earth, and there appeared the first example of the modern factory system, machinery being then driven by steam power. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, when the old order of things had for the time gone astray and special triumphs of science and industry continued peacefully to revolutionize human life. In 1803, the year of the renewal of the French Republic, William Radcliffe of Stockport greatly increased the efficiency of the power loom, and thereby checked the production of cloth. Finally, the year 1814 ought to be remembered not only for the first abdication of Napoleon, but also for a peaceful and wholly beneficent triumph, George Stephenson's "No. 1," Killingworth locomotive.

The list might be extended far beyond the limits here treated in this work, but enough has been said to show that democratic and industrial forces closely synchronized their action, and that while the former waned the latter grew more potent, proving in the years 1840-2 the mood of the English reformers in efforts which Pitt and his friends had failed to carry through in the years 1780-5. So intense an action of new and potent forces had never before been known in the history of man. In truth no one but a socialist could have foreseen the

beset him, and, as it were, feel our way along the filaments which connect an individual with the world of his age.

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, died in 1764. The name named after him, began his political career in the year 1780, when he was elected Member of Parliament for Appleby. The decade which then began was a new era in British history. Then for the first time the life of the nation was shaken to its depths by forces of Democracy, Athene-like, sprang to maturity. It challenged and threatened the stability of thrones and empires, while this militant creed won its first triumph. Under George III, it began also to colour the life and the aspirations of the masses, especially in America. If the troops of Washington had been victorious, the thought would none the less have survived the barriers of class. The march of armies and the march of thought never.

The speculations enshrined in the "Social Contract" and the teachings of the Encyclopaedists were crude, or even false. Nevertheless, the new ideas such as no age ever had known, and none would know again. The course of the American Revolution and the foundation of a State based on democratic principles proved that the new doctrine had practical results. The young giant now stood on earth.

Side by side with this portent in the

But in the years 1780-3 there was a universal con- burden of debt and taxation was unendurable. 1781 voted the enormous sum of £25,383,857. Means, an increase of £814,000 on the previous finances and debt of Ireland were kept entirely the end of the century, this burden fell upon persons, and involved a payment of about £2 1 amount then deemed absolutely crushing.

But two important facts should be remember the investments of British capital in overseas unde are now enormous, were apart from the British India practically non-existent in the year 1780 being then an almost self-sufficing unit financi that modern methods of taxation are less ex collection and less burdensome to the taxpay prevalent in that non-scientific era. The reven- cluded the following items: £12,480,000 for " Lottery," £2,233,000 for "Certain Purposes Fund," £2,000,000 Bank Charter, and so on. C fourth of the requisite amount was raised by m now be considered sound."

The National Debt was then reckoned at £1 the annual interest, amounting to £6,812,000, ate more than one fourth of the "bloated estimate. The burden of debt seemed appalling to that the Three per cent. Consols sank from 60½ in 53 in November. But further blows were soon Ministers at the nation's credit, and the same t- tween 50 and 45 when William Pitt became Pr December 1783. Predictions of national bankrupt

active part of his father's career fell with the problems which confronted Chatham. They therefore presented none of that which baffled the penetration and forethought that, with a prophetic vision of the future, in thrilling words the invincibility of which then his life-work was done; from his only warn, and vainly warn, the danger. His son was destined to enter that which he entered it when his people were burdened with disgrace.

What were the material resources of a man equal to the strain imposed by a disaster? To resist the subtly warping influences of such questions closely concern us in our present greatness of a statesman is not to be content with enumeration of his legislative, diplomatic, and administrative achievements. There is a truer method of valuation than that of the *Edinburgh Review*. It consists in weighing his achievements against his difficulties.

It is well, therefore, to remember that the year 1780 was a small and poor people, not merely with modern standards (a method of present inquiry), but with the burdens which the population of England and Wales at that time put a little over 7,800,000; that of Scotland 1,400,000. That of Ireland is even less. The population in England and Wales d

of their fathers. Reason and reflection bade them follow the policy of George III and the means whereby he saw his way through to the bitter end. St. Stephen's, Westminster, the shrine of the nation's liberties; it now, so threatened them with a slow and inglorious extinction to the laws had ever been the pride of the nation, that virtue might involve subservience to a corrupt faction.

Yet however great the provocations, Britons set right these wrongs in their own way, and not as they had set at Geneva or Paris. In truth they had one great advantage denied to Continental reformers. At Paris reform necessarily implied innovation; for, despite the dictum to the contrary, it is safe to say that the relics of the Revolution of France offered no adequate basis on which to rebuild her social and political fabric. In England the foundations were in good repair. The structure needed repair, not rebuilding. Moreover, British reformers were not without tradition inclined towards tentative methods rather than wholesale schemes. Even in the dull years of George III for a Reform of Parliament was not wholly without success, and now, at the time of the American War, the demand, which nearly achieved success. In fact the programme of 1780 satisfied the aspirations of the reformers, even in the years 1791-4, when the excitement of the French Revolution, and the writings of Thomas Paine popularized the levelling theories then in vogue.

Certainly, before the outbreak of the French Revolution the writings of Continental thinkers had little vogue in England. The "Social Contract" of Rousseau was not with

while a wise use of the lessons of adversity has been acquired to a lease of healthier life.

If we turn our gaze away from the narrow confines of Britain to the institutions and sentiments of the world, we will appear many bizarre contrasts and contradictions. At first sight the self-contained, untroubled life of the Georgian era might appear to be the result of the triple strain of a serious national character, the strong influences of the new democracy and the new world. The situation was indeed most alarming. "The fall of an Empire!" wrote Horace Walpole. "The moment would that moment were come when we should see the ruins of our ruins." In truth, had the major part of the world been undone. There are times when a nation is stolidity; and this characteristic alike in the past which was responsible for the prolonged life of the avert collapse at its close. The course of the world that the brains of Englishmen were far from equal to the task of bearing the weight of the world were equal to the task of bearing the weight of the world thus were able to supply the material needs of the world by the new manufacturing forces, could not have been.

Then again, British institutions offered a firmness and adaptability which at no time in the history of the race. Had they been a more fluid as those of Athens they might have

1780-3.]

## INTRODUCTION

bade fair to make the House of Commons the mouth of the royal will. The King's influence, impaired by the disasters of the American War, asserted itself at the time of the Lord George Gordon Riots in June 1780, a break of bigotry and rascality for a time paralysing both Ministers and magistrates; but while all around George III held firm and compelled the authorities to do so. The riots were quelled, but not before hundreds of desperadoes had perished in the flames which they kindled. Those who saw large parts of London ablaze looked on George III as the saviour of society. This it was which enabled him to retain his influence scarcely impaired by the disasters of the American War. The monarch's power was firmly rooted than at any time since the reign of George II. Jacobitism survived among a few antiquated Tories like Johnson, as a pious belief or a fashionable affectation. In the year 1763 the lexicographer, after receiving a pension from George III, avowed to Boswell that the pleasure of being in the House of Hanover and of drinking King James's health amply overbalanced by an income of three hundred pounds a year.

As a sign of the reality of the royal power, we find that public affairs were nearly at a stand still at the time of George III (November 1788 to February 1789). A Foreign Office despatch, sent to the British Minister at Berlin at a critical time in our diplomatic relations with Prussia, was not signed by Pitt and the Foreign Secretary, the Marquis of Rockingham, considered themselves the King's Secretaries, and were unable to move until the royal will was known:

loyalty to the throne and to the dynasty among all classes. As Burke finely said on the accession of George III, "they changed their idolatry." The personal charm of George III, as to help on this transformation. An English squire, set off by charm of manner and speech,<sup>1</sup> none too common in that class, who remembered the outlandish ways of the Stuarts. Furthermore, his morals were distinguished from theirs, as was seen at the time of his marriage, the wiles strewn in his path by several of his predecessors. A frankness worthy of the Restoration, a straightforwardness, and his love of country endeared him both to the masses of the people and to the select circles which began to learn from Rousseau and the charms of butter-milk. The princess of the House of Mecklenburg, who was against vice and extravagance, but in the end which won few to the cause of virtue. George III was to be alluring. Idle tongues wagged and sought to encourage the wearing of drab rather than those of ever-fashionable colors. He prohibited the wearing of ostrich feathers.

The reader will fail to understand the difficulties often besetting Pitt and the difficulties often besetting Pitt that George III not only reigned but governed with the Whig factions left him victorious. The shortsightedness of the elder Pitt was breaking up their power. Both of the old Whig families the supremacy of the old Whig families profited by the efforts of the Earl of Cornwall. It was seen in the twelve years of almost personal rule which Lord North and the well-fed pha-





which, being once more formed, will of  
Constitution to its usual energy and effect.

Ewart and our other ambassadors  
mark time as energetically as might  
to them until after 17th February 1791  
recover.

At ordinary times, then, the King's  
as essential to the working of the Go  
plains the eager interest, even of me  
Regency disputes of 1788-9. In tru  
central fact of the nation's life; and  
from the personal popularity of Ge  
edifice had a solidity unknown in the

Montesquieu praised the English  
without undue friction a balance of p  
and Commons. This judgment (pen  
though the royal authority had in  
creased. But the power of the nobles  
largely controlled the House of Comm  
the election of 11 Members in the L  
the whole country 71 Peers were able  
secure the election of, 88 commoners  
fluenced the return of 72 more. If  
whether titled or untitled, it appears  
nominate 487 members out of the 65  
Commons.

In these days, when the thought

1780-3]

## INTRODUCTION

*Private.*

Grosvenor Square, Nov.

MY DEAR SIR,

I FEAR it will not be in my power to return to Holloway by which I shall be prevented from so soon troubling you with the only subject I do not like to converse with you upon, viz. the subject of Preferment. But my anxiety for my friend Jackson, standing that the Bishopric of Chester is not yet given away, I plead my excuse to you for asking it for him, and perhaps you will give me adding that from local circumstances that preferment hands would be particularly agreeable to me, on account of my northern property being situated in the Diocese of Chester. I assure you that a compliance with this request would make me happy.

Believe me,  
CARM

Reverting to matters which are purely secular, we find that in the year 1783, at the time of Pitt's assumption of office, the number of English peers was comparatively small, about 240, and of these 15, being Roman Catholics, were not sit in Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

This select aristocracy was preserved from some of the evils incident to its station by healthful contact with the affairs of the country. The reversion of its younger sons to the ranks of commoners prevented the formation of the huge caste often very poor but always intensely proud, which covers the surface of society in Continental lands; and again, the presence of commoners (generally the ablest governors, soldiers, and seamen) preserved the Order from intellectual

that generation, imbued as it was with a conviction that victors had a right to the spoils and should distribute them to their followers according to rank and merit. The subject-matter was spoken of under the conventional phrase "the peace," which, when used in a political sense, means for assuring the triumph of the victors and the satisfaction of the faithful. While not implying actual bribery, the system of patronage exerted through peerages, places, and pensions was a powerful inducement to this scheme of things; strenuous supporters of the government would earn a title, a bishopric, a judgeship, or a post in the customs or excise. These allurement were powerful attractions in an age which offered far fewer opportunities for advancement than the present. With the exception of a few strange persons who preferred to make their fortune in trade, all of all classes had their eyes fixed on some office or honor, and divided their attention between the pursuit of it in its occupant and the signs of the favor which might expectant part of Society resembled a landscape at the approach of evening, except that the aspect was not one of signs of quiescence but of ill-suppressed activity. Among the confidential letters of that time, the ambition of the British nation as a mountain climber. Pitt's time was taken up in reading and writing of a bewildering variety. College friends desired preferment, with or without cure; some desired to be canons; canons to be deans; deans to be bishops; wealthy bishops coveted sincere deans; and so on, so early enough, that of London was the most infected. The infection spread to all classes. Gauge

Shallows of Pitt's time did not fulfil these manifold duties systematically; for that would be alien to the haphazardness of the squires and far beyond their talents. Local government slumbered as much as it worked; and just as the English prefer the fitful barbarities of the Turks to the evenness of the pressure of the Russian bureaucracy, so the villagers of Cossackdom may have been no more oppressed than those of France and Italy are by a system fruitful in good works and in officials and taxes. On this point it is impossible to quarrel; for the Georgian peasantry was dumb until the years after 1800, when Cobbett began to voice its feelings.

The use of the term "despotism" for the rule of the local gentry is no exaggeration. They were despots in their own right. Appeals against the rulings of the local magistrates were costly and generally futile. It was rare to find legal aid on their side; and the unaided wits of local landowners dealt with all the lesser crimes (many of them punishable with death or assizes) and the varied needs of the district. With the coming of the peace it lay to nominate the guardians of the poor, the "visitors," who supervised the relief of the poor in the parishes of parishes resulting from Gilbert's Act of 1782. The power of the Draconian game-laws was entirely in their hands, too, in days when the right of sporting with firearms was reserved to owners of land worth £100 a year. Finally, lest there be any community of sentiment between the bench and the dock, at the oft-recurring trials for poaching, the same money test was applied to all applicants for the honor of magistrate. The country gentlemen ruled the parish and virtually ruled the nation.<sup>1</sup> The fact was proclaimed with characteristic insolence by the Lord Justice Clerk, Macquharten, in his address to the jury at the close of the trial of James Muir for sedition, at Edinburgh in August 1793: "Government in every country should be just like a Corporation in this country; it is the business of the landed interest

this respect the British aristocracy ran so. It is true that its members took an active part in the government of the country. Their work in the House of Lords was practical, there, if less exciting than those of the Commons, but with more experience, wisdom, dignity, and self-respect. The nobles were lacking in the Lower House. The nobles were not engaged in the executive duties of the State. Not only the nobles but the younger sons fill most of the public offices, and often thankless, diplomatic posts, but they were also engaged in the counties and on their estates, as lords-magistrates. The days had not yet come when the nobles were free from the terrors of the English winter. They spent the parliamentary vacations at the country houses, in the duties and sports which from immemorial times had made our folk into a compact and sturdy whole. Whether the pleasures of command did not lead to the perils and fatigues. Apart from the duties, the nobles, the higher honours, there were hosts of courtiers, and many sinecures to excite cupidity and encourage idleness. After emoluments and pleasure became keener, the glorious peace of 1763, and a perusal of the works of any statesman of the following age must admit that public life was less corrupt than at the time of the Restoration.

Then, again, in the making and working of the laws, the nobles and gentry were dangerously ignorant. In the eighteenth century those classes strengthened their position in Parliament and on the counties and parishes. In 1711 no definite property qualification was required for members of Parliaments, but in that year the

been modelled on the sun and planets, the latter accompanied by inferior satellites.<sup>1</sup>

The customs of the *beau monde* in London were one all-absorbing preoccupation, that of killing time manly and graceful manner. Fielding, in his "Jones" thus maps out the day of a fop about the middle of

In the morning I rose, took my great stick, and wall green frock, with my hair in papers, and sauntered about to the Auction; told Lady B. she had a dirty face, lung something Captain G. said I can't remember what, for well hear it, whispered to Lord —, bowed to the Duke, was going to bid for a snuff box, but did not, for fear I did it. From 2 to 4 dined myself, 4 to 6 dined, 6 to 8 call'd at Drury Lane Playhouse, 10 to 12 Drawing room.

The sketch of West End life given by Montipastor who visited England in 1752, is very similar, into more detail. He describes fashionable people about all the morning in a *neglige* attire, "your hair but merely rolled up in rollers, and in a frock and morning lasted till four or five o'clock, then the hat for dinner. The most usual dress in that summer, very dark blue, a short white waistcoat, and white & black was worn for full dress, and Monte's anti-English seemed to prefer dark colours. There seem to be one of the chief aims and occupations of our people remarked on the extraordinary vogue which every then enjoyed.

One is tempted to pause here and dwell on the fact, at the time when England and France were

the country in the twinkling of an eye cannot be removed."<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Highlands, still claimed extensive use, several of them made patriotic use of them during the great war with France, afterwards Lord Lynedoch, is the seat of feudal influence.<sup>2</sup>

. In many districts the squires received support from "nabobs." Those descended from homewards of Indian officials, for the plunder. They became an appreciable class of expense so long as they could support the higher gentry, they adopted the manners of their betters; so that many a country gentleman, by their greed and ostentation. The squires were victims of their land-hunger; witness Grose in his Olio of the year 1792, the feverish race for display. As the country was against the influx of Syrian ways, might Johnson have thundered against the profusion of the Orient with the English life.

For the most part, however, the country is that marks our race. Certainly the signs of the advent of commerce are visible. The distinctions of rank in England are a German, who was accustomed to the German and Rhenish Courts. Continued the precision of etiquette.



Moritz, as it surprises us when we remember that close of a ruinous war. In the third year of the mercurial Horace Walpole deplored the universal declared that when he sat in his "blue window," he saw out of ten of the lordly chariots that used to roll in the seventh year, when the half of Europe halts against the Island Power, the Prussian paste but affluence and heard nothing that did not savoured of avarice and sometimes boastful patriotism. At the same time he observed that everyone wore silk stockings, and he noted that even poor people when they visited that abode of luxury were dressed so as to copy the great, and always in order to draw up in state at the entrance.<sup>1</sup>

Ranelagh and Vauxhall, we may note in passing, were still within the confines of the London of 1780. The city of London was but slowly encroaching on Tothill Fields; and the House, standing on the site of the present Buckingham Palace, commanded an uninterrupted view westwards over the city and its market gardens spreading out towards the little village of Uxbridge. On the south of the Thames there was a mere strip of land from the confines of Southwark to the Archdeaconry of Lambeth; and revellers returning from Vauxhall to their river or road, were not seldom sobered by trysts with the even more dreaded Mohawks. Further afield the country was completely rural. Trotter, Fox's secretary, and a statesman as living amidst bowers vocal with the song of St. Ann's Hill, Wimbworth, and Pitt, in his visit to the force or Dundee at Wimbledon, would probably pass through a row of houses between Chelsea and the little old village of Putney. That village and Wimbledon stood in the

the hereditary foe. Is it surprising that he made all his efforts in 1786 to bring about a union on the basis of the common interests of the two nations?

To revert to our theme: the frivols of Mayfair, which figure so largely in the history of the period, probably filled a smaller space than we are apt to infer from those sources which eye for the homely as well as the courtly. The good qualities which kept the framework of the nation remarked that in London, outside the fashionable districts, were plain and domestic, the people getting up at five o'clock, and worked hard.<sup>1</sup> His tour of the islands also gave him the impression of a well-balanced prosperity. He was even surprised at it being assumed that a pedestrian must be a beggar. There is little doubt that even at the end of the eighteenth century England was far more prosperous than any other country in Germany.

The wealth of the proud islanders was more apparent than at the chief pleasure resorts of the continent, as Ranelagh. These gardens and promenade were greatly admired, and he pronounced the scene as the most brilliant which he had ever witnessed. The change of faces, the far greater number of people, the beautiful, together with the illumination and splendour of the place, with the continued gaiety, makes an inconceivably delightful impression. From the curiosity of the Prussian pastor, we can see the gay throng, and discern the prince

For the present, however, no one in England contemplated such change. The spirit of the nation, far from being depressed by the growing burdens of the American War, seemed to be more sensitive to the appeals of *littérateurs* like Horace Walpole might have ruined the Empire; William Pitt might have declared the wickedness with all his father's vehemence; but the most part plodded doggedly on in the old path, with little of reform, except in so far as it concerned the abolition of sinecures and pensions. In 1779-80 County Associations were founded in order to press on the cause of "reform"; but most of them expired by the year next, and in thought and in customs England seemed to be insensate and servative.

The reasons, other than racial and climatic, for the stagnation of Georgian England would seem to be these. An enthusiasm, whether in politics or religion, had been dangerous ever since the vicarages of the High Church in the reign of Anne had imperilled the Protestant succession. So far into the century, especially after the advent of "the Prince Charlie," all leanings towards romance were regarded as a reflection on the safe and solid House of Brunswick. The first of political virtues, and common-sense, was a reflection on the safe and solid House of Brunswick. The first of political virtues, and common-sense, was a reflection on the safe and solid House of Brunswick.

External events also favoured the triumph of the status quo, which is so obvious in the Georgian literature. The call of the sea and the influence of the sea were no longer inspirations to mighty deeds. The great venture was past, and the day of company promoters and adventurers had fully dawned. Commerce of an almost unbounded extent had been established, and the great

in the northern suburbs opened up completed in 1761. On the east, chapel, though houses straggled on. The amount of the road-borne traffic the fact that the Metropolis possessed Bridge, Westminster Bridge, and B. till the year 1763 did the City Father standing on London Bridge which two carts to pass. Already, however along the chief roads out of London of September 1754 is a pleasingly in end visit to the villa of a London in desolate fields near Kennington Co. of which one had a view of criminals St. Paul's cupola enveloped in smoke.

Nevertheless, the Englishman's love drive Londoners out to the dull Elephant and Castle, or beyond Ty thus, in the closing years of the century of interests (city versus suburbs) which social life of the metropolis. A further waning in popularity of Vauxhall and social clubs in general. These last had able relief to the monotony of a stay-at-home club became less necessary when the river or at "Marybone," and when the on horseback every day in passing for. Another cause for the decline of clubs less to be found in the distress caused

That year forms a dividing line in European history in the career of William Pitt.

Though ominous signs of the approaching storm may be seen, the noble and wealthy wasted their usual round of riotous living. It may be well to glance at the typical vices of the age, drinking and gambling, in those circles alone where they are deemed interesting; only do records reach us.

Drinking did not count as a vice, it was a cherishment. The depths of the potations, after dinner, and on excursions during the day, had always been a feature of English life. Shakespeare seems to aim these well-known lines at the Danes:

This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Do sell our addition;

Certainly in the eighteenth century drinking was a sense-a-flying buttress of the national fabric. The rise of our "mercantile system" brought about the Methuen Treaty of 1703 with Portugal, in our trade with that harmless little land at the expense of our "natural enemy," France. Hostility to the French was the first of political maxims, good citizens though patriotic to become intoxicated on port wine the sober on French claret. Though we may not credit Smith's hopeful prediction that the abolition of all drink would have furthered the cause of temperance, yet it is true that the drunkardness of the age was mostly due to

and harbours. Its results were seen in the nation, and in the lowering of human life, which in its turn enabled especially after the scare of 1745, to continue until more than 160 crimes were put

The barbarities of the law and the courts finally led to protests in the name of humanity. These came in the first instance from the Quakers. But the philanthropic movement did not arise until it was fed by the evangelical revival.

Wilberforce (the ablest champion of the cause), and the reformer of prisons, were living in a time which exists between spiritual fervour and the foundation, in the year 1787, of the *Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade*, the philanthropic movement of self-denying effort, which for some time had support from Pitt. Other signs of the movement were wanting. In 1772 Lord Chief Justice Mansfield held that slaves brought to the United Kingdom were to be treated as chattels, which dealt the death-blow to slavery. In 1773 John Howard began his work on the reform of gaols; and seven years later Sir John Howard by Robert Raikes. The protests of the Quakers at Bunbury against the pillory, the efforts of the Quakers to prevent the disgraceful over-crowding of the crusade of Romilly against the slave code are also a tribute to the gentleness and kindness.

These ennobling efforts, however, were not without their fruits. The

lunch on a jug of barley-water. Stories to this effect of "farmer King George" to the plain, wholesome folk of the provinces in whom lay the strength of England; but there was no responsive feeling in courtiers and nobles, who took such lenten fare as scarcely human, certainly not royal.

The behaviour of the Prince of Wales, however, brought matters back to the level beloved of the *clumsy* orgies of Carlton House were not seldom heeded; an amiable society seems to have suffered no qualms that the prince was more than once saved from surprise by prompt removal of encumbering silks.<sup>2</sup> Dinners became longer, and more luxurious. Experienced diners were no longer able to reckon the banquet, not by the number of glass bottles. Instead of figuring as an incident in the day, dinner became its climax. We find Horace Walpole in February 1777 complaining that it absorbed the whole evening: "Everything is changed; as always must happen, one grows old and is prejudiced to one's old ways. I am dining at nearly six, not beginning the evening at five. If one does not conform one must live alone."

Many letters of that amazing writer show how the four hours was spent. Take this reference to Lord Chesham: "He was seventy and had a chance to have carried him to a hundred, if he had not died of an intemperance that would have killed anybody at the time. As it was, he had outlived by fifteen years all who have recked into the terry heat so long before him. Horace Walpole laid his finger on one of the worst Statesmen and generally, parsons and squires, were more or less affected by the same disease. The

of the potations. The phrase, "a port wine," was in the close of the nineteenth century ascribed to the crusted veterans of a bygone age, whose first bottle, second bottle, and became drivel only at the third. It relates how a reverend Silenus, a Doctor of Divinity, was once discovered in the small hours feeding himself by the delusive help of the railings of the Bodleian Library, and making lay remarks as to the progress of the journey.<sup>1</sup> Where doctors led the way, and by the example; and the customs of Cambridge, and the advice of physicians, served to ingrain in the mind the wine which helped to shorten his life.

But the Universities only reflected the general state. "drunk as a lord" had become a phrase. It was usual to set about tippling in a moderate way, at times, at the different stages of the progress of the sessions were recorded in a quaintly introspective manner. Master of the Rolls in Ireland, when joined by the Prince of Wales to advise him about the state of the country, gave the witty and wise reply: "Faith, your Royal Highness is drunk enough yet to give advice to a man who is not marrying."<sup>2</sup> The saying recalls to mind the training and selecting diplomatists and the habit to ply the aspirants hard and then notice their secrets when under the table.

Fortunately, amidst the Bacchic orgies of George III stood steadfast for sobriety. The habits of Queen Charlotte were simple and her example deeply impressed by the miserable end of George Cumberland, whose frame always un-  
 Cumberland, whose frame always un-



the House of Commons. Personal feelings rather than political convictions seem to have determined their conduct; for Fox was not reviled a few years later when he went over to the other side. Meanwhile the Gordon Riots had shown the London mob in another light. As for the County Reform Association of the years 1780-4, they had very little hold upon the country towns, except in Yorkshire; and there the movement was due to the exceptionally bad representation and to the support of the great Whig landlords. The experience of those years proves that political action which arises out of temporary excitement (especially of a material kind) will lead to little result.

That mercurial and ill-educated populace seems to be shaken off its political indifference only at the time of a general election. Moritz describes the tumultuous joy with which Londoners took part in the election of the year 1782. The apprentices, carters and draymen eagerly listening to the candidates at the hustings; their shouts for a speech from Fox; the close of the election which even the poorest seemed to feel in their country's interest made a deep impression on Moritz, who found the sight far more exhilarating than that of reviews on the parade ground at home. His mental comparison of Londoners with the Romans at the time of Coriolanus was, however, cut short when he saw the rampant spirit of liberty and the wild impatience of a mob in an English mob." At the end of the proceedings the assembly broke down the hustings, smashed the benches and chairs, and scattered the fragments about with them as signs of triumph.<sup>1</sup> Robespierre and Marat, who saw something of English life during their exile in this country, declared that Britons were free only during a general election; and the former averred that the use which they made of "the brief moments of freedom renders the loss of liberty more than deserved."<sup>2</sup> Certainly their elections were times of wild excitement and the authorities seem to have acquiesced in the carousing and rioting tending to promote a dull, if not penitential, obedience in the sequel. Not without reason, then, did Horace Walpole exclaim at the close of the American War—"War is a tragedy in reality, but politics but a farce."

This chapter would extend to account were given of what was, vice of the age. Gambling has tured, reckless and ostentatious mental resources within themselves in the vagaries of chance. vice of the savage Teutons whom and certainly none of their descendants. Englishmen of the Georgian era. face against the evil. The murmur he forbade gambling at Court on "twelfth-night." The courtiers threatened furiously on them, until they too palaces, even on that merry festival of Wales neutralized his father's preceded in contracting debts to they were considerably paid by ponent of George III, Charles Prince of Wales in zeal. At an a have lost £12,000; and, putting respectively £12,000 and £11,000 more Pitt, plunged into play for a brief strong a hold over him, resolutely meshes. Thereafter that genial w moral of their early careers by dustrious and idle apprentices of

The mention of Hogarth awak his self-satisfied age. One begin ner of life of those coarse thickset of his realistic canvases. Were I really given over to Bacchic orgi of flesh-restoring torpor? What

enough weft for his loom. This necessity quickened the mind of a Lancashire weaver, Hargreaves; and in 1764 he coined his "jenny," to lighten the toil of his wife. In quick succession came the inventions of Arkwright and Crompton, and the results were noted. The results obtained by the latter were surprising, fine and other delicate fabrics being wrought with success in Britain. In a special Report issued by the East India Company in 1793, the complaint was made that every shawl imported offered for sale "British muslins equal in appearance and elegant patterns to those of India, for one fourth, or more than one third, less price." Further improvements increased the efficiency of this machinery, which spread extensively in the north-west of England, and in Lancashire. The populations of Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Bolton, after 1780, began to increase amazingly. Hitherto they had numbered between 30,000 and 60,000 souls. Now they began to outstrip Bristol and Norwich, the second and third English cities.

It is noteworthy that the Industrial Revolution in this phase, brought wealth and contentment to all members of the community. The quantities of thread, varying in fineness, were severally invariable in texture and strength, enabled the loom weavers to push on with their work with more efficiency than formerly caused by the inability of hand spinners to supply the requisite amount of yarn. There was, true, lost somewhat in economic independence, for the weaver sank to the position of wage earner in mills, but on the whole less hard worked than before, water turn power previously applied by the spinner's foot, and the weaver retained its independence because the father and his

society where war and waste seemed to be the only way. Yet he should remember that the industrial revolution which is chronicled, while it was being taken for granted, found its record in memoirs, or histories. We read of the American War the sum of the National Debt, the interest on which was to £9,669,435.<sup>1</sup> But do we indeed remember the great difficulty raised a revenue to bear this load and the far heavier load of the Napoleonic Wars? The people should remember that British industry was in its expansive phase. The condition of the country with that of a sturdy oak which had been cut away and its foliage blighted by the war, the soil deep down, the sap of life dried up, the verdure, and in a few years the oak would be shapely and imposing as ever. Her astonishingly quick recovery after the exertions of the great man was a testament to her strength. But one man can do little. It was many to fruitful issues; and the first decade of his supremacy was a testament to the nation's roots with a new and firm foundation.

Below the surface of the nation's life, intrigues, there lay another world. Watt and Trevithick, of Hargreaves, were slowly taking shape in the air of the future. Already its strength was sufficient to send up enough

the textile industries enhanced not only the wealth of the country but also the prosperity of the working classes in districts which had been the poorest and most backward.

Limits of space preclude any reference to the revolution wrought in the iron industry when coal and coke began to take the place of wood in the smelting of that metal. It may be said to say that, whereas the English iron industry had stood in danger of extinction, it now made giant strides ahead. In 1779 the first iron bridge was erected at Coalbrookdale, near Shropshire, Severn. Six years later Cort of Gosport obtained a patent for converting pig-iron into malleable-iron by a new and ingenious process;<sup>1</sup> and in 1790 the use of steam-engine blast furnaces trebled their efficiency. This and the force of the steam-engine will suffice to remind the reader of the enormous developments opened up in all manufactures by the skill and patience of Watt transformed a scientific toy into the most important generator of power hitherto used by man.

Thus, in the closing years of the eighteenth century, a much despised century, which really produced nearly all the inventions that the over-praised nineteenth century was to develop—the Industrial Revolution entered on its second stage. The magnets which thenceforth irresistibly attracted the eyes and therefore population, were coal and iron. According to the Great Britain had abundance of these minerals in close proximity, she was able in a very short space of time to become the workshop of the world. The Eldorado dreamt of by the discoverers of Columbus was at last found in the Midlands and north of the north of England. For the present, the discovery was no curse with it. While multiplying man's powers, it also developed his ingenuity in countless ways. Far from dis-

spinning machinery which came  
1770.

This fact is emphasized in a  
shire village drawn by one wh  
momentous developments. Will  
sperity which they brought to the  
formed the bulk of the populatio  
about fourteen miles north of  
1788 to 1803 the golden age of  
house in the village was fitted as  
of each family averaged from 8  
shillings a week.<sup>1</sup> This account  
be a large manufacturer at Sto  
but there can be no doubt that  
North of England provided the  
the country speedily to rise with  
time when friends and enemies  
Some idea of the magnitude of  
be gained from the official retu  
goods exported from Great Brit

1710	.	.	.
1751	.	.	.
1764	.	.	.
1780	.	.	.
1785	.	.	.
1790	.	.	.
1795	.	.	.
1800	.	.	.
1806	.	.	.

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1780-3]

## INTRODUCTION

veterate enemy; and in the brightest years of his seemed about to inaugurate the golden age foretold by the Illuminati. As by contact with Adam Smith he marched at the head of the new and peaceful commercialism, so too through his friendship with Wilberforce he felt the throb of the philosophical movements of his times.

For the new stirrings of life in the spheres of religion and literature, Pitt felt no deep concern. Like his father he was that great genius of the South who wrecked his career for the sake of "a political being." In truth, the circumstances of the time compelled him to concentrate all his energies on public affairs. It was his lot to steer the ship of state through twenty of the most critical years of its chequered voyage. Taking the helm at a time of distress, he guided the bark into calmer waters. Though he himself did not live on to weather a storm more perilous and awful than that from which he at first saved his people, even in the vortex of the Napoleonic cyclone he was to show a dauntless bearing, the firm faith in the cause of ordered government, the unshaken belief in the destinies of his race, which were the son of Chatham and the typical Englishman of the

South also advanced in wealth, rotation of crops, deep ploughing, soil altered the conditions of life. way. Arthur Young, in his "Travels," tires of praising the intelligence and owners, whereas in France his *seigneurs* "skip." In the main, no was just. Landlords in England were reform. In France they were clogs here were not all for good. The communal and almost torpid life the claims of the new age; and, an injustice to the poor, individual farming became the order of the especially in the form of mail-coach (result of the Wilkes affair)—these the years 1770-84 heralded the dawn be more earnest, more enlightened complex. The times evidently holding to all that was best in the claims of the coming era. Such a

In many respects he summed up of the closing decades of the century of his father reflected all that was in the middle of the Georgian era. land to heights of splendour never helped to retrieve the disasters brought disregarded the warnings of his father and of son there was a state of mortals, but the younger man came in touch with the progressive tendencies. Adam Smith he set himself to



Never since the age of Elizabeth had Englishmen so personality so forceful, of self-confidence so independent, of patriotism so pure and intense. The effect produced by his hawk-like eye, his inspiring mien and oratory was he the consciousness that here at last was an honest statesman in an age when that great party manipulator, Walpole, had turned politics to a game of give and take, the scrupulous Chatham (who refused to touch a penny of the interest on the balance at the War Ministry which all his predecessors had appropriated) shone with redoubled lustre. His personality was such as to dazzle his contemporaries. The wide-spread admiration in 1756-61, his superb confidence as to their own strength, the power of his oratory, his magnetic influence, the confidence of brave officers feel the braver after an interview with him, all enabled him completely to dominate his contemporaries.

In truth his personality was so dazzling as to elude the power of portraiture. At ordinary times he might have been taken for no more than a replica of that statesman of the reign of Charles II. whom Dryden has immortalized:

A man so various that he seemed to be  
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.

But Chatham was fortunate in his times. He was very much to the elevating force of a great ideal. A part of his life, when no uplifting influence was available, his actions were often grossly incongruous and at times factious. Not until he felt the inspiration of the ideal did his genius wing its way aloft. If it be true that Chatham made the British Empire, it is also true that the Empire made him what he was, the inspirer of heroes.

## CHAPTER

### EARLY YEARS

I am glad that I am not the eldest son, in the House of Commons like papa.—PIT

**C**HAMPIONS of the customs have been disquieted by observing that the endowments of the parents were wisely and showered upon his younger son. Chatham was a second son, and found in Henry Fox, Lord Holland, also a coincidence the extraordinary talents of them in their turn to the head of the engaged them in the longest duel of the ment record. And when the ascendant Younger appeared to be unshakable, tered by the genius of the second son, de Buonaparte.

The future defender of Great Britain, 1759, just ten years before the great less than the time of his birth, seemed of the Earl of Chatham, he saw the brilliant victories of Rodney, Boscawen lessened the French navy by sixty ships, secured Canada for Britain. The father felt for the second son. “

lovable than that of her husband. In contrast to his theatrically lordly, and imperious ways, she shone by her simplicity and sweetness. His junior by many years, she accepted his devotion with something of awe, and probably felt his oft recurring attacks of gout, for which he magnificently apologized, to be a hindrance between them; for the Jove of the Senate became docile and human when he was racked with pain.<sup>1</sup> Her tender care at times, and at others her tactful acquiescence in his moods and plans, ensured tranquillity and happiness in their household. So true that she lacked firmness of character, when occasion required, but we may ascribe her pliability to the personal ascendancy over her lord, to the customs of the times, and to her perception of the requisites for a peaceful existence. She carried her complaisance so far as to leave to her consort the choice of residence at Hayes, near Bromley, in Kent, which he bought at the end of the year 1754. The following are the almost Griedel-like terms in which she deferentially states her opinion on the matter: "For the grand affair proposed by my dear love, I have only to reply that I wish him to follow what he judges best, for he is the best judge what sort of economy suits with the different plans which he may choose to make hereafter. Whatever you determine upon will be secure of being approved by me."<sup>2</sup>

When a woman renounces all claim to a voice in the selection of her abode, we may be sure that she will neither interfere in her husband's political career, nor seek to shine in a *salon* with blue stockings. In fact, Lady Chatham's influence on her child was purely domestic. Her realm was the home. There is no trace of any intellectual impressions early exerted upon the gifted son, William, but her loving care ensured his survival through the "little wars" of childhood, and his health and

we find it domiciled at or near Blandford produced one poet of quite average ability (1699-1748), whose translation of Virgil has a love of adventure and romance, so often found in the families, had already been seen in Thomas Grenville, who worked his way to the front in India despite the opposition of the East India Company, became Governor of Madras, and was involved in very questionable transactions.<sup>1</sup> His greatest achievement was the purchase of the famous diamond which was sold to the Regent of France for nearly £100,000. He purchased. He married a lady who traced her descent to the son of James V of Scotland; and to a lady who was an adventurer with the scion of a chivalrous family. We refer the will-power and the mental endowment to the brightly in their grandson, the first Earl of Temple.

On his mother's side the younger Pitt was of distinguished descent. Her maiden name was Grenville; she was the daughter of Richard Grenville, first Earl of Temple. The appended table will show the connection of the Grenville families:

RICHARD GRENVILLE m. HESTER (Countess of Temple)

RICHARD GRENVILLE  
(Earl Temple), (1711-  
79).

GEORGE GRENVILLE  
(1712-70) (m. Elizabeth  
Wyndham).

GEORGE GRENVILLE (2nd  
Earl Temple, and Marquis  
of Buckingham). d. 1813.

WILLIAM  
GRENVILLE  
(Grenville)



ever attended ye both, and that my  
address to the Omnipotent Disposer  
directed in all things by the blessing

Or take this gentle chiding to

I do not [hear] from you, my dear  
way that makes up to me in the belief  
I cannot, however, help wishing  
receiving now and then a few words  
almost a reflection that obliges me  
take up any part of the small leisure  
from your various calls.

The old lady long retained  
1795 she describes herself as  
mind to wish the wind to shift  
might not be detained."<sup>1</sup> In  
body, as in the constancy of  
husband. We find Wilberforce  
the following note in his diary  
antiquity—Lady Chatham as  
interested about politics—seems  
active mind."<sup>2</sup>

Doubtless, her pride in the  
the singular buoyancy of her  
death. She must have recognized  
In appearance he certainly  
two noble Gainsboroughs of  
Park shows William to have

1759-73]

## EARLY YEARS

in the younger Pitt a harmony of the faculties, in which his father was lacking.

There is ample proof of the devotion with which Pitt loved his parents. His letters to them were long and frequent. While he addressed Chatham in the stilted terms of an Earl himself affected, he wrote to his mother in a direct style that tells of complete sympathy. In his youthful letters to her he apologized humbly for every act of inattention; and in later years the busy Minister often begged her forgiveness for his long silence. 363 letters to his mother have survived, and prove the earnestness of his love. Clearly also he valued her advice. In the crisis of the early part of 1783 he asked her opinion whether he should take office as Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> For the most part the letters contain little more than references to private affairs which prove the warmth of his family feelings; but especially in the later years when the overworked Minister could rarely visit his mother at her home, Burton Place, Somerset, he gives reasons for hoping that the progress of measures through Parliament, or the state of the negotiations with France during the Revolutionary war, would permit her a visit. The letters bear touching witness to the buoyancy of spirit which buoyed him up; but sometimes they are clouded by disappointments in the political sphere, and then all the keener because they held him to his post and prevented the longed-for stay at Burton Pynsent in August or at Twickenham. In such cases Lady Chatham's replies are restrained and sympathetic. I shall sometimes draw on this correspondence where it reveals Pitt's hopes for the work of the new





[1759-73]

## EARLY YEARS

graces of Chatham, could not satisfy the imperious the father, with the result that William received an of admiration. He was "the wonderful boy." John for the army, with results no less unfortunate for a similar choice proved ultimately to be for France of Joseph Bonaparte. Well would it have been for Kingdom had John Pitt allowed the glorious name to sink to comfortable mediocrity on the pattern of Hayes or Burton Pynsent, and never to be associated with the Isle of Walcheren. His colleagues in the Cabinet respect his judgement as that of a safe man; but, will show, he was utterly lacking in energy and inspiring others.

William, having alertness of mind and brightness was designed for Parliament. Or rather, this was the age of seven. In May 1766, on hearing that he raised to the Peerage, he told his tutor, the Rev. son, in all seriousness, that he was glad he was a son, but that he could serve his country in the House of Commons like his papa.<sup>1</sup> The words have often been even by Earl Stanhope, the boy being reported to want to speak in the House of Commons like papa. when correctly cited, are remarkable, not for child but for a grave and premature sense of responsibility show the strength of that patriotic instinct which is action of his career, spurring him on to his early stud complex and crushing duties of his youth and making sound the keynote of his character and enable us notion of the strength of that life-long desire to serve his country. This, his first recorded utterance, links it

of Chatham will dare to assert that the armies of Louis XV were foes as redoubtable as the Asiatic hosts called into being and marshalled by the Revolution and Napoleon.

Nevertheless, there is one of these fallacies which deserves a brief notice. Lady Chatham, by one of her grandchildren which was the daughter of Chatham or Mr. Pitt, replied: "Your doubt."<sup>1</sup> The answer is remarkable. No man has been blessed with such prodigious talent both in husband and son; and we, looking at the inner forces of the two periods which shaped the nation, may perhaps be inclined to ascribe her virtues to the early memories of the wife even over those of the maternal pride. Explain it as we may, her conduct is certainly a signal instance of self-effacement; of prudence, and consistency whereby Pitt reached her rightful place in the years 1783-93 which was the glory which he derived from her.

It has often been remarked that great men owe more to the mother's nature than to that of the father; and Pitt dowered his second son with the qualities that were his own: ability, display, and domination, his mother contributed to him forethought, steadiness of purpose, and a certain reserve that endeared him to a select circle of friends. It might suggest a parallel between Pitt and Napoleon, who owed to his father characteristics named above, but received from his mother the calmness of mind and body which made him so terrible.

expression of their thoughts in dignified and classic language. The ease with which, from the time of his first entrance into Parliament, Pitt wielded the manifold resources of his tongue may be ascribed partly to hereditary genius, partly to his daily converse with one of the greatest of orators. It was his habit to read with his favourite son passages from the Bible or from some other great classic. We also know from the Earl's private memoranda that he made it a rule to clothe his thoughts in well chosen words.<sup>1</sup> Indeed he talked but always conversed. We may be sure, that the lighter efforts of the statesman must have been rendered once an inspiration to great deeds, a melodious and instructive lesson in rhetoric. What youth possessed of genius have had his faculties braced by learning English in this tongue, by viewing mankind through such a lens?

This education at home probably explains one of his characteristics, namely, his intense hopefulness. By reading the best authors, imbued with the highest principles, and all knowledge of the seamy side of life, he cherished a firm belief in the triumph of those aims which he felt to be true. This is an invaluable faculty; but it needs to be tempered by acquaintance with the conduct of the average man. Experience Pitt scarcely ever gained except by observation. George Trevelyan has remarked that the comparison of Macaulay in youth led to his habitual over-estimation of his knowledge usually possessed by men. Certainly the creation of that singular figment, "Macaulay's school," a similar remark probably holds true of the quality of his optimism noted above. Partly, no doubt, his hopefulness was brought about by Christianity; but it was strengthened

short and thin and weighed Observers, however, agree that his weakness; and to this character will, we may attribute his struggle career to the age of forty-seven proof of the victory which his matter.

Very naturally, his parents did home rather than at a public school formed the most unfavourable impression system and summed it up in his had "scarce observed a boy who that a public school might suit disposition, but would not do what

The tutor chosen for this purpose of Pembroke Hall (now College) him from his sixth to his fourteen of tutor and pupil is seen in a Weymouth in September 1766 standing by him while he read, frequently lit up the subject and in ardour, he adds, could not be charged to have been highly efficient, as consider the phenomenal attainment his admission to the University of

It is perhaps significant that the oratorical power, Macaulay, was with our public school system. They may have owed some of their or the private tuition which they university. Had they passed the

[illegible]

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**Figure 1**

[illegible]

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to define the objectives and goals of the project. This helps to clarify what needs to be achieved and provides a clear direction for the team.

3. The third step is to develop a plan or strategy to address the problem. This involves breaking down the problem into smaller, manageable tasks and determining the resources needed to complete each task.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress regularly to ensure that the project is on track.

5. Finally, the fifth step is to evaluate the results of the project. This involves assessing the outcomes against the objectives and goals and identifying any areas for improvement.

It is not clear whether the above results are due to the fact that the model is not fully specified or to the fact that the model is not fully estimated. The results are not clear because the model is not fully specified and the model is not fully estimated.

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第 1 章 緒論  
 1.1 研究背景及意義  
 1.2 研究目的及範圍  
 1.3 研究方法及技術路線  
 1.4 論文結構

[illegible]

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be addressed. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

whom all men revered; and his lo seemed to be especially favoured. pride of race must have helped to youth on whom nature and art a graces of a chivalrous order. In a co have been snobbishness. In Will devotion to the ideals of his father a their ultimate triumph.

In some respects there is truth in that Pitt never was young. Certainly forcing process was perilously early. Papers (No. XI) I have found a cur the boy had over Latin at a very ear to his father, the general correctness with its large round letters enclosed but probably belongs to 1766, that i age.

MI CHARISSIME PATER,

Gaudeo audire te rursum bene va caunnuck et Wappinger, Tribuum Ind qui veniunt in Angliam supplicare regem Johnson, eques auratus, desiderabat a omnes abierunt ut pugnarent contra Gall sentiebant Batavos arripuisse omnes suo illos parum commode tractabat.

Sum, mi charissi

til

I have also found a curious proof the boy wrote to his father, while on

The poem, which is in William's handwriting, shows the age of twelve he had acquired the trick—it was no of writing in the style of Pope and Johnson. The line us of the felicitous phrase in which Cowper character output of that school:

The click-clock tintinnabulum of rhyme.

But they show neatness of thought and phrase. In a w are good Johnsonese.

The same quality of sonorous ponderosity is observed in Pitt's letters of 3rd June 1771 to his uncle the statesman Temple, thanking him for a present, in which the names of Lyttelton and Coke are invoked. In the following sentence the trend of the boy's thoughts is very marked: "I reverence the more, as I have heard Lyttelton and Coke were promoters of the Constitution, which is a synonymous [*sic*] term for just liberty." The "marvellous boy" ends by quoting part of a line which still more powerfully inspired him:

avunculus excitat Hector.

The next year saw the production of a play, which his brothers and sisters acted at Burton Pynsent on 30th March. Here again the motive is solely political: a King, Laurence, on his way homeward, after a successful war, suffers shipwreck and is mourned as dead. The news leads an ambitious cousin, Gordinus, to plot the overthrow of the regency of the Queen, but his advances are repelled by a faithful minister, Iphigeneia—the character played by William Pitt—in the following

Our honoured Master's steps may guide her on,  
Whose inmost soul she knew; and surely she  
Is fitted most to fill her husband's throne,  
She, whom maternal tenderness inspires,  
Will watch incessant o'er her lovely son  
And best pursue her dear Laurentius' plans.

Pompilius warns the Queen of the plot of Gordinus, suades her to entrust her son Florus to his care in a quiet retreat. Thither also Laurentius comes in disguise;

style will appear from his first poem  
which bears date May 1771.<sup>1</sup> It  
of Harriet and William Pitt:

Ye sacred Imps of thund'ring Jove  
Immortal Nine, to me propitious  
Inclining downward from Parnassus  
To me, young Bard, some Heavenly aid  
From Aganippe's murmur strain  
Assist my labours and attend my pen  
Inspire my verse. Of Poetry's power  
Thro' *Her*, the deeds of Heroes  
Renown'd in arms, with fame immortal  
By *Her* no less, are spread thro' the world  
Those patriot names, who in the field  
Triumphant fall, for Liberty and Law  
Exalted high, the Spartan Hero  
Encircled with his far-renowned name  
Whoe'er devoted for their country  
Thro' *Her* their fame ascends to Heaven  
*She* too perpetuates each horrible crime  
When laws are trampled, when  
That shall the Muse to infamy  
Example dread, and theme of scorn  
Nor less immortal, than the Clouds  
The Poets' names, who spread  
Homer shall flourish first in Rome  
And still shall leave the Roman  
With living bays is lofty Pindar  
In distant ages Horace stands  
These Bards, and more, fair Greece  
And some may flourish on this shore  
Witness the man, on whom the Muse  
Who sung our Parents' fall and ruin  
A second Homer, favor'd by the Gods  
Sweet Spenser, Jonson, Shakspeare  
And He, fair Virtue's Bard, who sings  
The praise of Freedom and Law  
But high o'er Chiefs and Bards  
Shall Publius shine, the Guardian  
Him shall th' immortal Nine attend  
With deathless fame his gen'ral name  
Shall tune the harp to loftier strains  
And thro' the world shall spread



1759-73]

## EARLY YEARS

we are not surprised to find from notes left by his first Bishop Tomline that the half of Pitt's boyhood was broken by illnesses which precluded all attempt at study. But this did not stop the growth of his mental powers, which Wilson summed up in the Platonic phrase, "Pitt seemed never to learn but always to recollect." At the age of fourteen and a half, then, he was ripe for Cambridge. It is true that youths then entered English Universities at an age fully as early as the Scotch who went from the parish school, or manse, straight to Edinburgh or Aberdeen. Charles James Fox, Gibbon, and the Marquis of Epsom became Lord Eldon, entered Oxford at fifteen. William Pitt, who at seventeen went up from Hull to St. John's College, Cambridge, was probably the senior of most of the freshmen of his year; but the case of Pitt was even then exceptional.

Cambridge on the whole enjoyed a better reputation than Oxford for steady work; but this alone does not seem to have turned the thoughts of the Earl of Chatham so far east. He himself was an Oxford man, and the distance of Cambridge from Burton Pynsent, the usual abode of the family, naturally have told in favour of Oxford.

The determining facts seem to have been that Wilson's companionship was deemed essential, and that he, as a graduate of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, turned the scale in favour of his own college. This appears from Wilson's letter of 2nd Dec. 1772 to his wife:

I could not have acted with more prudence than I have done in the affair of Pembroke Hall. Mr. Pitt is not the child his years make him to be. He has now all the understanding of a man, and will be, my steady friend thro' life. . . . He will go to Pembroke

prepares to overthrow the traitors. In due season the adherents defeat the forces of Gordinus, who is slain by himself, while Pompilius, his standard bearer, kills the conspirator. The King grants a general pardon.

Us it behoves, to whom by gracious Heaven  
The cares of nations and of States are given,  
Us it behoves with clemency to sway  
That glorious sceptre which the gods bestow;  
We are the shepherds sent to tend the flock,  
Sent to protect from wrong, not to destroy;  
Oh! Florus! When thou govern'st our day,  
Bear these thy father's precepts in thy mind;  
Thro' love control thy subjects, not thro' fear;  
The people's love the bulwark of thy throne;  
Give not thy mind to passion or revenge,  
But let fair Mercy ever sway thy soul.<sup>1</sup>

It is fairly certain that none of the children of the Revolution have written these lines; and the fact that the play is an action is political further stamps the play as a work of the Spirit of the Future seems to have hovered over the mental derangement of George III in 1788. The play raises questions relating to a Regency not very unusual in the mind of the boy playwright. The sense of local colour which informs the play was then also to guide the author through a bewildering maze. Indeed this is like a marionette's version of the Regency. The play is like a more romantic George III, Pompilius is a more romantic Pitt the Prime Minister, the King is a more undutiful Florus) and Fox may pass for the Duke of Devonshire. The *motif* of the play twangs a mimic prelude of Carlton House. In the acting of the play the author seems far to have surpassed William, who acted the part and awkwardly. Such was the testimony of a lifelong friend, who saw the play acted at Hayes.<sup>2</sup> The criticism is valuable as showing that in Pitt's nature was the shyness and *gaucherie* which were ever to hamper his progress.

Juvenile authorship has its dangers for a

1773-8]

## AT CAMBRIDGE

The facts are as follows: Mrs. Sparry, who was housekeeper at Burton Pynsent, went to Cambridge boy through his long and serious illness, and finally home. At last the invalid was strong enough to be Four days were taken up in reaching London; and writing thence to his mother on 6th December 1773. He had been fatigued and felt strong enough to walk all the way but, he added, Mrs. Sparry urged him not to write. He did not return to Cambridge ("the evacuated seat as Chatham styled it) until 13th July 1774. The Lady Chatham that Cambridge was empty, that he called on him and had inquired after Mrs. Sparry. He was glad to hear that the bed at his rooms had been made. These trifles enable us to reduce the oft quoted narrative to proper insignificance.

Wilson seems to have done his best to amuse himself in the dreary vacation time of July - September. On 24th August Pitt described to his mother a ride in the country and he had lost their way among lanes and fields, and the track with some damage to hedges, and after a long time of the steeds, but far too late to share in college sports. On 1st September, he wrote to the Earl of Chatham that for celebrating this day is as great at Cambridge as at home and Mr. Wilson himself, catching a spark of it, signified by killing a crow on the wing after a walk of six miles.

The natural vivacity of disposition, which characterized his friends, must have played no small part in the recovery of his health. The medical authorities of to-day would assign more importance to regular hours, exercise, and diet than to the use of port wine, adopted in a

CHA  
AT CA

A man that is young in yeares  
time. But that happeneth rarely.—

ON 26th April 1773 Pitt's  
Hall, Cambridge; and  
8th October 1772. His heal  
concern, Wilson stayed with h  
imprudences and accompany  
tions were in vain. Despite th  
at Lyme Regis, where William  
June up to 21st September, h  
remained in bed for several w  
of Drs. Addington and Gly  
Chatham), he gradually got  
gout; but the letters which p  
Wilson attest the severity of  
have won the love of his me  
this sentence in her letter o  
William has to conciliate t  
acquainted with him."

There is a story told to Tho

There must have been sterling qualities in the man thus signally honoured. Dr. Pretymann's attainments were vast. Senior Wrangler and Fellow of his College, he was also a Fellow of the Royal Society; and his attainments in Greek enabled him to command the respect of his pupils at Cambridge, where, according to Wilson, Pitt had the Platonic gift of *anamnēsis*, but of instinctive remembrance (*ἀνέμνησις*). Nearly all contemporaries seem to have found in the Bishop a primness and austerity which were far from pleasant. Perhaps he lacked the vitality which might have enabled him to master a mass of learning. Or else the consciousness that he was a Senior Wrangler, together with the added load of tutorial and administrative responsibility, may have been too much for him. He was nurtured amidst the magniloquence of Hayes and Pynsent, the seriousness and pedantry of Pretymann appeared natural and pleasing. To outsiders they were a study, and the general impression of half-amused, half-bewildered admiration is cleverly, though spitefully, expressed in the *Rolliad*:

Prim preacher, prince of priests and prince's priest,  
Pembroke's pale pride, in Pitt's *præcordia* placed,  
Thy merits all shall future ages scan,  
And prince be lost in parson Pretymann.

Among the most interesting parts of the biography of Pitt are those in which he describes his attainments and studies at Pembroke Hall. The tutor found him, as expected, exceedingly well versed in the classics, so that he met with any difficulties. Chatham had prescribed the study of Thucydides and Polybius; and the young university man was familiar with little more, consequently, to the

colleague, Dr. Turner, in 1771 alone. The undergraduate soon which was strong and lasting. interruption, not even from the young Prime Minister so freely bishop, who in 1803 took the name the friend and adviser of the St. which succeeded the death-blow arms, and he was his literary executor materials put into his hands (or he wrote one of the dullest biographies

The solution of the riddle name of his mind, which was that of a it lacked the gifts of interest in character, of delicate and instinctive imagination, which enliven, re personalities and situations. The diabolical wit, once described la thought. Tomline, with labour have looked on biography as a Certainly he portrayed only the discernible in the tomes of the Parnassian finnikin scrupulousness clogged powers of portraiture with which biographer was continually beset executor, the result being a portrait stately, succeeds only in being catch glimpses of Pitt under the friend adorned and concealed in brief. The Bishop was beset by

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## AT CAMBRIDGE

ated the mind, cultivated his oratorical gift, and equipped him for the parliamentary arena.

From Tomline we glean a few details which picture the young undergraduate in his surroundings that his manners even at that early age were formed by a behaviour manly, that he mixed in conversation with vivacity and perfect ease. His habits were most regular; he failed to attend morning and evening chapel except when prevented by ill health. Owing to his father's habit of reading a chapter of the Bible every day, his knowledge of Scripture was unusually good. Tomline mentions a circumstance which will serve also to illustrate Pitt's powers of memory and fine sense of sound. On hearing his former tutor recite a chapter of Scripture in support of his "Exposition of the Articles," the statesman (it was in that anxious moment) stopped him at one text with the remark—"I do not find that passage in the Bible, and it does not sound like the Bible." He was right: the passage came from the Apocryphal books which he had not read.

The singular correctness of Pitt's life while at Cambridge posed him to the risk of becoming a bookworm. From this he was saved by his good sense and his love of the world. "The wonderful boy" was begged by his parents and the Muses too assiduously. Chatham's fatherly anxiety and love of classical allusions led him to run this metaphor, but the strained classicisms had the wished for effect; he was regularly and far. In the Pitt Papers (No. 221) I find a proof that, while at Cambridge, he was trained in the essential art of fencing. At a later date his old fencer, Peter Renaud, sent to him a petition stating that he

As regards his mathematical attainments, he had already read the first six books of Euclid, entered the elementary parts of Newton's *Natural Philosophy*. The bent of his mind was towards the Humanities; but he had a good knowledge of the Classics; and he became expert at the solution of problems in geometry, which aroused his deepest admiration. Various mathematical and astronomical subjects extant in the MSS. (a copy for reproduction here) show his proficiency in the exact sciences.<sup>1</sup>

At Cambridge, above all, he devoted himself to the classics. The ease with which he mastered the Greek, as Lycophron's "*Cassandra*" attests, was doubtless familiar with his exceptional powers of memory, induced to give him an exceedingly wide knowledge of the literatures of Greece and Rome. He had neither the need nor the inclination to devote himself to the art of versifying in those languages, which still absorbs, so much of the energy of the mind. Accordingly the life, thought, and spirit of the ancients became thoroughly familiar to him. His knowledge of the pieces of art and imagination was so extensive, that his comments in his handwriting on the MSS. of the ancients suffice to refute the gibe of certain contemporaries, that he kept up his acquaintance with the ancients by tags for his speeches.<sup>2</sup> To some of these, which were directed towards his future career, he devoted the Earl of Chatham, he bestowed great attention on the ancients; and he seems to have been particularly critical notes on the speeches which he had read, the various arguments were, or might be, and a close and loving perusal of Shakspeare's plays. It can be seen that Pitt's studies at Cam-

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 196. The notes and diagrams on the MSS. are considered dynamically: there are also many other MSS. numerous are the notes on English History.



mission to attend a month's course of lectures on C the fee of five guineas; and later on he stated th "instructive and amusing," besides requiring little In that term he took his degree in the manner afor in 1777 he moved to other rooms which were small sheltered from wind and weather. About that t launched out more freely into social life, so we may the not infrequent requests for increased supplies. C 1777 he writes that he has exceeded his allowance first sign of that heedlessness in money matters v hamper him through life.

The chief feature of interest in these early letter quent references to the politics of the time, which s kept the service of his country steadily in view. T March 1775 during vacation time at Hayes, he v brother, begging him, if he leaves his pillow before out the fate of Mr. Burke's motion on behalf of conc America. He signs the letters on behalf of "the Hayes," possibly a reference to a family debating noteworthy that the struggle of the American c George III was the first political event to arouse which must have been heightened by the fervid Chatham on the subject. A little later a side edd set in, for his elder brother, Lord Pitt, on receiving sion in 1774, joined his regiment, which was quartered at Quebec and Montreal. On 31st May 1775 William Cambridge that the papers are full of the bad news doubtless the fight at Lexington. Ten days later he r Chatham to send, along with the "Ethics," Davenau War, and Alliance," as it is not in any library in Clearly, then, the youth was alive to the legal and questions then at stake.

favourite son. The father in his letter claimed any, except those required on the :  
quently though Pitt had the right to don the  
"gentleman-commoner" (afterwards called  
he did not do so. In his first letter to his  
his cap was "to be stripped of its glori  
plain loop and button."<sup>1</sup> It is further ple  
father wished him not to make use of the  
privilege which allowed sons of noblemen  
without sitting for examination; and the  
alone led him to resort unwillingly to this

We are here reminded of Wordsworth's  
of social equality to be found at Cambridge  
titled arrogance and old-world subservien  
unchecked and unrelieved in most parts o  
are worthy of quotation because they sh  
valent at Cambridge, at least at St. John's  
poet to sympathize with the French dem  
Cambridge as

A Republic, where all stood thus  
Upon equal ground, that we were  
In honour, as in one community  
Scholars and gentlemen; where  
Distinction open lay to all that  
And wealth and titles were in le  
Than talents, worth, and prosper

We do not know whether Pitt's feelings  
to those of Wordsworth, who entered St  
surroundings were not such as to favour  
ideas. In his first two years he mixed sca  
graduates, and even after 1776 his circle  
limited, doubtless owing to his intense s  
constant association with Dr. Pretymar  
1776 he writes home that he had been s  
the house of Lord Granby (the future I  
had returned to the "sober hours and st  
he rarely refers to pastimes and relaxatio

did not tend to cure him of the awkward shyness which was so prominently a trait in his character. He went forth into the life of Westminster weighted with a serious defect, an incapacity for making a wide circle or winning over enemies. In a sense it may be said that he took political life too seriously. He prepared for it too strenuously as partly to stunt his sociability and thereby handicap himself for life. For in the political arena was the close preserve of the nobles and nabobs, with whom a statesman could scarce enter unless he had the manners of the clubs and the instincts of a sportsman. A compromise between Lord Chatham and Launcheon would have made the ideal leader. As it entered on the scene a compromise between Cato and Aristides.

Pitt's chief relaxation from the "sober studies" at Hall was found in visits to the great debates at Vespers. The first of these visits belongs to the month of June when his father was pleading passionately for conciliation with America. Benjamin Franklin, the champion of the colonies, was present; and the orator clearly aimed at persuading his kinsmen beyond the seas that they had the sympathy of many British hearts. Those two orations echoed through the halls of New England and the rocks of the West. What, then, must have been the effect of the living presence of that superb presence, which tripled the power of even a sensitive youth whose being ever thrilled responded to his father's? "Language failed him to express his feelings," he wrote to his mother, "but he felt that he was in the presence of a great man."

bequeathed to Pitt the sum of £3,000.<sup>1</sup> But the University counted for much in time, and governmental influence made or marred a man; therefore note that as Pitt's health improved in years at Cambridge, he also became friend of Lord Westmorland, Lord Euston, Lowthian Pratt (Lord Camden), Pepper Arden, Elihu St. John.

The name of him who was perhaps perhaps here conspicuous by its absence. Wilberforce at Cambridge, partly, perhaps, because he was at St. John's College until 1776 and then became a dissolute set; but he made Pitt's acquaintance at the end of their time there, and the youths were drawn together by their brilliant conversational gifts and the wit which were to be sharpened by delightful intercourse at and Wimbledon. In a passage penned by Pitt contrasts the comparative ill fortune of Pitt with the fortune of his rival, Charles James Fox, who had the acquaintance of a number of brilliant youths: Windham, Erskine, Hare, General Fitzpatrick, Townshend. Nearly all of these, it is true, were short-lived; but it is scarcely fair to say that Pitt's circle (to whose number Wilberforce adds Lords Alford and Westmorland were to prove themselves able in the future Duke of Rutland, though showing more played much ability as Lord Lieutenant of Devonshire "the precise" (as the *Bellied* terms him).

1773-8]

## AT CAMBRIDGE

Rousseau had brought out in 1762 his "Social Contract" which Quinet has described as the seed of the French Revolution. Whether Pitt perused these works is doubtful; but that in his reading he had an eye for the causes that mar the fortunes of nations. Witness the remark of 10th March 1778, that nowhere in history could he find an instance of a Nation so miserably sacrificed as this. He shared the general conviction that none but Chatham could steer the ship of State into safe waters; and deep had been his concern when the King refused to hear of forming a new Ministry for the purpose of conciliating consideration, not even the loss of his Crown (so Lord North) would induce him to "stoop to the Opium Trade."

Such conduct bordered on the insane now that he had made common cause with the United States; but there was no means of forcing the King's hand. The majority in the House supported his Minister, Lord North; and little was expected from the Earl of Chatham in view of his infirmities of mind and body. His haughty and exalted no less than his inconsistencies of aim had scattered his following; and it was but a shadow of a name that he brought to the House of Lords on 7th April 1778. Faint, looking deadly pale, but with something of the old fire in his eyes, he entered, staying his tottering frame on his cane, and James. He spoke twice, urging the House to save the monarchy by conceding full independence to America, or else by giving way before France. "Shall this great nation now fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon? No, no, fall, let us fall like men." Much of the speech was in opposition to his former opinions; but the peers reckoned

St. Stephens. Never has the debates; and here his Greece and Rome enablements of a speaker, assess a retort. During one of his introduced to Charles James debater in the Lower House scribed the rapt attention listened to the speeches of him with the remark: "But thus," or "Yes; but he lay can Fox have imagined maturity, were frequently

The nice balancing of together with the art of v and persuasive speaker; b things are but trifling ad plete equipment, but lost Nature, imagination and l gifts no less than in the sm a distinguished presence, a these excellences were ad all adventitious aids. And weight to attack and cov wholeheartedness and pers pompous greetings of the law of nations tribe" at P of his son's application t during the latter part of l outlook on public affairs

## CHAPTER III

### POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP

I cannot approve of the requisition, in the studies of future statesmen, of so much theoretical knowledge, by which young people are hurried on before their time, both in mind and body. When they enter public life, they possess indeed an immense stock of philosophic and scientific material; but in the narrow circle of their calling this cannot be applied, and will therefore be forgotten as useless. On the other hand, what they most needed they have lost: they are deficient in the natural vigor and bodily energy, which is quite indispensable when one enters with efficiency into practical life.—GOETHE.

THE lives of English statesmen have very rarely been enervated by that excessive zeal for education which the great German thinker discerned as a possible defect in his fellow countrymen. Certainly to those who had devoted their youth to the learning of Leipzig, Heidelberg, or Göttingen, and then proceeded to a Staats-secretariat at Weimar, Cassel, or Berlin, must have been a life of sheer drudgery. The *déterminée* policy of many a Continental State sprang from the persistent attempts of some Pegasus in harness to the serene heights of his youthful contemplations. Our youths did not meditate on the science of

For the greatest statesman and be but one place of sepulture. The House of Commons had previously voted an address for a public funeral to be held at Westminster; and probably of a man who regretted the decision. The pettiness of his nature when, in the House of Commons, he referred to Chatham's breakdown as a "political exit." He now stated that the monument dwelt only on Chatham's services to the nation at the beginning of the century. The money paid to the deceased statesman was a "national measure" to him personally.<sup>1</sup> "An ill grace," is William's description of the funeral.<sup>2</sup> No one represented the House of Commons in June, a fact which gave to the funeral a great popular demonstration. It was a triumph.

Owing to the absence of the Duke of Devonshire, William was the chief mourner. He had no knowledge of his manifold duties. He gazed at the stately procession, at the pomp and glories and hopes, could not survive the sorrow. Following the hearse was destined to be a great present and to link once more the past with the work of national revival.

<sup>1</sup> "Corresp. of George III with the Duke of Devonshire," vol. 1, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 12.



inadequate to meet the demands of an ambitious young age when money no less than family standing served as passport to a public career.

Nevertheless, the lack of resources seems to have stimulated energies that were ever braced by difficulty. About five years after the funeral of his father, we find him expressing to Lord Chatham his resolve to take rooms at Lincoln's Inn. His law-view practice at the Bar was invaluable as a training for the wider and grander service to which he had early vowed himself.

In one important particular Pitt's conduct showed foresight. He did not, as might have been expected in days when travelling was slow and expensive, give up his rooms at Lincoln's Inn, broke Hall, but for nearly two years he continued to reside there, even while keeping his terms at Lincoln's Inn. Extravagant though this arrangement seemed to be, it was based on prudential motives. In the miserable condition of the country, which public affairs then were, he judged that a dissolution of Parliament could not be long deferred; and the chance of winning a seat at his University seemed to him, though at his teens, greater than at an ordinary constituency, where the deep pockets of grandees or nabobs must mar his prospects.

About Cambridge, then, his hopes fondly clustered round the fact that it was "a seat of all others the most desirable, as being free from expense, perfectly independent, and I think in every respect extremely honourable."<sup>2</sup> The words have the ring of a manly determination which marks all his public utterances.

The following letter of his to Mr. John (afterwards Lord) Townshend, then one of the members for the University, is the first official announcement of his intentions:

lightly than was the rule elsewhere; and to Dr. Pretyman may have been part of the advancement in learning achieved under even so, the regular studies had no bent of a statesman other than that which comes from the choice of the philosophers and historians of Greece. His first choice of lectures on Civil Law was his first step towards his degree in the autumn of 1776, he followed the bent of his mind, which led him to study the crises in national affairs, of welfare or decay. It is significant that when Bonaparte approached historical study he took a different way.

Above all, Pitt haunted the precincts of the law, there learnt to view politics, not as a science, but as a craft. To him, therefore, there was little risk of being overwhelmed by a digested mass of theoretical learning, or of being lost in the shifting problems of the Commonwealth, or of being lost in the transition from the breezy upland of the law to the political mill of some petty principality. He led Britain's sons to come to ever widening views of their minds, never "sicklied o'er" at the narrowness of the alertness and vigour which Goethe found in the better equipment than the best elaborated system of the richest store of precedents. This natural bent ought to produce not *doctrinaires*, but statesmen.

The chief misfortunes of Pitt's early life were his precocity, which the Earl of Chatham in the sense of responsibility thrust upon him, and the terrible bereavement described above. When he went then abroad with his regiment, William was surrounded by a network of cares. The finances of the country were in a barrasted state. Chatham's habits had led to a conduct in official life so honourably scrupulous that it was encumbered with debts. Parliamen-

## 1779, 1780] POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP

declaration of war by Spain. At first he avowed his concern at this event; but the note of hopefulness, which long absent from his letters, soon begins to reassert its expression of a belief that this new danger may "be productive of some good effects at home, and that there may still be strength and resources in the country sufficient to preserve a remnant of a great empire." This forecast was justified. The struggle became one for national existence, waged against hereditary rivals, the monarchs of the House of Bourbon. The searchings of heart of England's sons, at war with their own kith and kin, were in large measure stilling by the thrilling incidents that accompanied the three years' struggle for Gibraltar by the Spaniards, our successes in India, and the naval triumphs of the closing years of the war still hardening of the nation's fibre under the strain of adversity and danger.

After residing at Burton Pynsent for some weeks in the autumn in order to reassure Lady Chatham while the scare was at its height, Pitt returned to Cambridge at the end of the year, and settled down at Lincoln's Inn in the early part of 1780. Thanks to the kindness of his uncle, Earl of Sandwich, he had been able to procure a lease of rooms on the north side of the attic of staircase number 4 of Stone Buildings (then called the Temple to Holborn). The sum of £1,100, which in November 1779 had pronounced "frightful," had been advanced on the condition that which Pitt was to inherit when he came of age.

Concerning Pitt's life at Lincoln's Inn we know very little. Nothing. The lack of official records of the Inns of Court, except unilluminating entries of dates, thwarts all attempts at reconstruction of his life at this time.

00  
WILLIAM  
University at the General Election,  
mediate notice of a circumstance of w  
be apprised as soon as possible.

At the same time he informed  
resolve, and received the following  
Christian name speaks for itself:

I cannot, my dear *William*, but int  
ever relates to your honour or intere  
pleasure the hopes you conceive that  
of Cambridge, may be inclined to tr  
Such a testimony at your age from a  
flattering. As to your prospect of su  
being totally unacquainted with eve  
merit. You must therefore be [*sic*] at p  
but sincere assurances of my best go  
you as may be in my power. How far  
you have more ripened in your prof  
ocean of politicks and expose yourse  
syrens, which have already seduced you  
and determined object of his life, is  
reflection that it is so may prove som  
not succeed. The memory of your f  
have attained speak forcibly in your  
most respectable that ever existed, we  
any living one, at least if I may gue  
sister. All therefore I can say furth  
thoroughly to examine the foundation  
not suffering your conduct to be wa  
from the event this measure shall a  
an outset in life will diminish much  
you have so deservedly raised. Your  
salutes you very kindly and gratefully  
tionately, without forgetting that ant  
shall be happy to receive you here, ca

mutably, to transfer to the general fund accounts ceased properly to belong to the King's private purse, and to regulate the whole on business-like principles. He proposed the suppression of useless offices in the general administration, especially the newly created Secretaryship for the Colonies, and the Board of Trade, the latter of which then formed a sinecure for eight members of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Most important of all, perhaps, was the proposal, brought in by Sir Philip Fox, to exclude from Parliament contractors - a class which had proved to have battered on the funds, and to have retarded the continuance of the war.

Had Burke's proposals stood in need of further vindication, they would have been supplied by the mysterious fate which befell them. Members of Parliament with scarcely an exception commended the measure, and the eloquence and pathos of the speech which Burke introduced it to the House. About the same time Lord Shelburne brought forward in the Upper House a bill for the proof of the greed of contractors and of the gross carelessness with which accounts were kept at the Admiralty Office. The defence of ministers was strong only in its weakness. Argument there was none; and it seemed that the festering scandal of corruption must be swept away by popular indignation.

From three of Pitt's letters, those of 9th and 20th February and 14th March 1780, we can imagine the high hopes of the reformer as he listened to the scathing attack on Mr. Fox by Lord Shelburne, and the comprehensive indictment of the Government by Burke. In the second letter he notes with joy the defeat of the ministerial majority to two; and in the small hours of the morning he was privileged to witness the stormy scene which

liam Pitt, aged 21, and James C  
was £9 9s. 10d. per annum.<sup>1</sup>

The great preoccupation of Pitt's  
topic of national danger, was  
Reform. Originating at York in  
volume until the petitioners in  
more than 8,000 freeholders. He  
call of Yorkshire; and Pitt hoped  
cause of purity and political freedom  
of sweeping away the network  
kept his hold on the House of Commons  
growth of debt and taxation rendered  
the most urgent of public duties.

In February 1780 Burke introduced  
Reform in a speech of great ability  
the special jurisdictions in Wales  
Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall  
extravagant and corrupt government  
forensic *retiararius*, sought to enforce  
within the cloak of humour which  
Affecting the desire to free the nation  
and absurd local restrictions, he proposed  
and you lose the King of England  
in coming again under His Majesty  
and no more than Prince of Wales  
find him dwindled to a Duke of  
of that north, and he hops upon  
the Earl of Chester." Equally  
Burke's attempt to reduce the number  
of sinecures attached to the King's  
abolish the offices of Master  
Comptroller, Cofferer, Treasurer  
Board of Green-Cloth, the War  
Board of Works, and the Keeper  
fox-hounds, and harriers, and on  
playful irony he described the cl  
sticks about the head of a r

"real beauties," but "ridiculous affectations." He ever, in his letter of 14th March: "I have heard two harangues from him since in reply that please me more than this does now that it is upon paper." This criticism from the son of Chatham, is a little surprising; but is considered symptomatic. As will appear later, the same thing in Burke's temperament which jarred on the statesman.

While disagreeing with Burke and the more academic reformers, Pitt did not consort with the men on the left who now raised a great clamour through the country. He seems to have had no dealings at this time with the "Economic" Associations; and events now occurring helped for a time to distract his attention from politics. He was expecting to be called to the Bar, London was in the throes of the Lord George Gordon rioters (2nd to 9th June).

What must have been the disgust of the young Pitt as he gazed at the scenes of rapine and drunkenness which were enacted on under the name of Protestantism! The pretence of religion was soon flung aside, and then, when the thin crust of civilization was removed, men saw appalled the depths of passion usually are hidden. For days the passions of the mob were unchecked by timorous magistrates and ministers. The government alone was undismayed, and finally insisted on the use of force. Thanks to his staunchness, the wheels of government began to move once more. Then the orgy was brought down; but it left men with a dread of the newly-revealed forces and a heightened respect for the one man whose firmness ensured the vindication of law and order. How much suffering then suffered can never be known. When, i

clauses of his measure. The bill from Parliament passed the Commons and the Lords.

Another surprise was in store. On 6th April Mr. Dunning brought a motion that "the influence of the Crown has increased and ought to be lessened." The motion was carried by a large majority when numerous petitions were presented by thousands of persons, on behalf of the Crown, in a larger addition to the representation. The motion showed some independence. The result was a sensation. Ministers seemed to be alarmed. Thomas Pitt of Bocconoc, ably supported by The Speaker himself left the chamber. The result and the resolution, after a trifling debate, was a majority of eighteen. But against the motion triumphed. Apparently Dunning's motion was a fear of the imminence of a general election, so also did the numbers of the opposition. North slowly but surely regained his influence and succeeded in defeating a motion for the dissolution or proroguing Parliament. The result diminish the influence of the Crown.

For the present Pitt stifled his opposition by attendance at the opera and by writing from his letters; but he probably was not satisfied with the Reform of Parliament itself, but Burke, must precede any other reform. The stables of the Court and the Admiralty were somewhat erratic politician, but later, had gone so far as to defend the Government and to urge reformers to concentrate on freeing Parliament from the corruption which was marring its character. To this belief was a recent damning proof that a Parliamentary borough-mongers had refused to



Fox, advocated a programme of reform. The Chartists with their "six points," confessed to Burne that the riots "will tend to discourage people to do themselves justice on any cause may warrant it";<sup>1</sup> and though Clive had his faith in the cause, yet he and all others found it a hopeless task to roll the stone which the enthusiasm of the people carried in 1780. After midsummer of that year the meetings and associations preached to deaf ears.

To return to Pitt's fortunes, we may say that he had been in no immediate danger from the mob, surrounded with flames on all sides. In the worst, the benchers took arms and formed a militia. Pitt had his first experience of volunteering in the Inn, however, show that it was also defended by the Northumberland Militia, the sum of £1000 for provisions to them for the ten days they were in garrison.<sup>2</sup>

The desire of the resident members of the Inn to entertain the officers of that corps led to the formation of a committee for that purpose, which included Arden (afterwards Lord Alvanley), Mordaunt (Redesdale), Bland Burges, and three others. In his reminiscences, tells how, when Lord Clive, Gibbon and Lord Carmarthen to meet them at company at dinner. The historian, a most entertaining talker, flitting easily from one subject to another, and lighting up all with his wit, his listeners were expected to receive with

hailed with too much approval to be ignored or rebuffed with a frown, he endeavoured to crush the youthful artillery. A spirited fire came in return, and a sharp exchange of wits began, which the company followed with the keenest interest. Finally the skill and vigour of the attack drove Gibbon from one position after another and left him defenceless. Upon this he left the room in high dudgeon. In vain Burges seek in the anteroom to calm his feelings and persuade him to return. "By no means," replied Gibbon; "I am a gentleman, and I have no doubt, extremely ingenious and able, but I must acknowledge that his style of controversy is not exactly what I am accustomed to, so you must excuse me." Meanwhile Pitt continued to hold his own topic in dispute, "which he discussed with such ability and force of argument, and eloquence, that his hearers were in the profound admiration."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the first recorded triumph of Pitt. We know more than the bare outlines of the discussion of this kind fate has vouchsafed here, as at so many points it affords information to whet the appetite for more, enough to give a mere glimpse of those surprising powers which excited Gibbon at his prime.

We know little about the extent of Pitt's legal attainments or his skill as a pleader. His practice was to last but a few years. Three days after the end of the riots he was called to the bar, and afterwards went on the Western Circuit, of which he was a member. As to the impression aroused by his early success, we have found very few particulars except the state of mind almost contemporary biography that his first case, *King v. Burges*, in 1780, was a turning-point in his life.

and had fixed 31st October for his successor.

This action was what might be called the most astute of electioneering. The Gordon rioters were still the terror of the world, and at such a time men were not to be deterred, either, in order to ensure the success of their cause," George III condescended to enter the shop of a draper in a peremptory way—"The queen wants Keppel. No Keppel." Windham was determined to keep his seat at Bristol; and he was ever on the Toryism of the day. In this case his election was highly probable, as the clergymen are not wont to favour a Whig candidate; but the truth was, his defeat certain.

He bore it with his usual serenity. He had not have run away with the prize, but "but my struggle has not been in vain." He more betook himself to legal studies, his thoughts still centred in Westminster, which marked our public life. Lord North at the general election, drew Pitt to St. Stephen's for his regular attendance at the House.

he doubtless remembered that his father first entered as member for Old Sarum.

While we smile at the vagaries of the old system, enabled "the great commoner" to begin his public career as representative of an untenanted mound, and his son as member for a town which he did not even visit, let us remember that finally it opened a door easily for a man of genius. On his Tory years, eulogized the system on these grounds. It is certainly remarkable that, besides the two Pitts, no famous men used these stepping-stones. Burke, throughout his public life, was member for a pocket borough, Wootton Bassett; Malton; and Canning entered Parliament as member for a scarcely discoverable village, Newtown, in the Isle of Wight. Fox and Peel also entered Parliament by similar means. Ever quaintly the old order of things misrepresented the people, it did now and then help to bring brilliant men to the front with a speed that is no longer possible. But it was worthy that young men of spirit took care to be members for pocket boroughs.<sup>2</sup>

Appleby having duly registered the decree of the House of Commons at Lowther at the close of 1780, Pitt took his seat in the House of Commons on 23rd January 1781. From that time until the same day in the year 1806 when he breathed his last, he expended his life in strenuous efforts throughout a century which comprised such events as the close of the Seven Years War, the new grouping of the Powers of Europe, the French Revolution, and the rise of Napoleon.

<sup>2</sup> Hazard, *l.c.*, 1056, 1057.

<sup>3</sup> Porritt.

## CHAPTER IV

### AT WESTMINSTER AND GEORGE

A series of undesigned changes brought the Empire to a condition that satisfaction and impatience, the two elements of conduct, were both reasonably gratified by it.—STURGEON

IN the present age, marked by peaceful and happy times, the different parts of the Empire and by the conduct of the sovereign and his people, it is difficult to see the necessity of public affairs at the time when Pitt entered the war with the United States, France, Spain, and Portugal, which threatened the ruin of the nation, and it furthered the progress of a constitutional crisis of great importance. The crisis resulted in no small measure from the personal character of George III; and, despite the disastrous consequences of the war on the Empire, there was still the chance of a new ministry at Westminster.

The reason for this paradox is to be found in the conduct of the House of Commons and in the conduct of the King. Ten years had elapsed since the publication of the Declaration of Sentiments, that, whereas in the previous century the monarchy had been the chief cause for fear and suspicion, the apprehension centred in the distempers of the King. The King, given above, and those soon to be set forth, were in a position of danger was still acute. The rallying of practical men to the Tory party to the King's side, the division of the chief groups, neither of which had any doubt of the enormous power which the monarch wielded, and the influence of the Lower House by means of "influences"

reformers who struggled for peace abroad and economy in the administration.

In fact, the disintegration of the party system and the disruption of the House of Commons had provided George III a most favourable opportunity for realizing the ideal in Bolingbroke's "Patriot King." The old parties had long since lost their *raison d'être*. All but a few fossilized Tories had given up the cause of the Stuarts. The Whigs no longer claim to be defenders of the House of Brunswick and the liberties of England. For more than a century they had lain down comfortably on the spoils of office, until the sudden change of magnates affecting to slay the slain and batten on the spoils aroused general resentment. Of this feeling the King made dexterous use. In the name of the nation he set aside the parties and govern in the interests of the nation. As generally happens in such cases, he called into being a new party, the King's Friends, which, under the guise of patriotism and the name of the nation, gradually ensured the subservience of Parliament to the royal will. By dint of honours, places, and money, his policy won its way, until, as we have seen, it could no longer make efforts for Reform. To the eye of alarmed patriots it seemed that the House of Commons would soon be little more than a tool of the King, and that George III would succeed where his father's enterprise which had cost Charles I his head.

There were some grounds for these fears. George III was to prove to the whole a more formidable opponent than the first George. While lacking the personal charm of the Stuart so that he could not rely on his power of calling forth enthusiastic service, he had the sense of him in common sense and the power of adapting me-

by an appeal to material interests. Charles was foolish enough to allow the pockets of his subjects. George II. the use of the pockets of the government. This sapping process was more than an attack above ground. The political resistance; that of George II. Early in the seventeenth century the liberties of the nation; now they degenerate into a King's Council register of the nation's will; and political deadness throughout the most threatening symptom of the Parliament could come near the high living and plain thinking. American War did not awake the nation was sleeping the sleep of surfeit. On the side of the Atlantic to the men who virtually controlled the nation. What effect was it that London chafed at the losses of the war? Eight members, as against Cornwallis, those connected with the nation. Gordon roused for a time, still they died down there ensued a lull on once more as in a land of the dim mutterings that came the disaster at Yorktown, which the War, did not thoroughly arouse the receipt of that news, Rome

he had been chief Minister of the Crown, latterly much against his will; and for fourteen months more the imperious was to hold him to his post.

With Lord North were associated in the year 1781 were fully contented with the task of supervising departments and the patronage belonging to them. Noteworthy of these Ministers were Lord Thurlow, a man of tastes and violent temper, but considerable gifts for whom who acted officially as Lord Chancellor and unofficially of "the King's friends"; Earl Bathurst, Lord President (Viscount Sackville), Secretary of State for the Colonies; Lord Townshend, Master of the Ordnance; Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards the Earl of Liverpool), Secretary at War; the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty; the Earl of Carlisle, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; and Mr. William Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland), Chief Secretary at Dublin Castle. The personality of these men will appear more fitly in the sequel. Here we must note that they resembled highly paid confidential clerks rather than Ministers. Of collective action and responsibility there was little under Lord North.<sup>1</sup> George III acted on the principle which guided the Caesars, *Divide et impera*.

Such, in brief, was the system and such were the men who had to confront a world in arms. Apart from the increasing conflict in America, the area of strife was spreading in Europe for the Dutch, incensed by our maritime policy, were on the point of declaring war. In India Hyder Ali was ravaging the Carnatic; and Britons, looking forth in fear from Madras, saw the clouds of smoke that told of his devastation.



which had not yet begun to coalesce into a national calamity. The larger of the two parties under the nominal leadership of Pitt, a man, an affable and tactful man, was formidable only from his connections with the great Houses. Among his followers two names were so great and varied as to claim a special mention: they were Fox and Burke.

Charles James Fox (1749-1806), then, was now in the prime of his powers. His gifts so rich and varied as not to be exhausted even by the dissipations into which he fell, even him to plunge before he left Eton. At Oxford, he gave proofs of his eagerness for knowledge, and imbibed that passion for literature which was to be his sole refuge. It had been for him had this been his only vice, he never shook off the vices contracted at Eton. With Mrs. Armistead was notorious his mania for gambling. Many a day he was in the House by the fatigue or an all-night sitting at Brooks's. He was whether caressed by Ministers in the House or in his rooms in St. James's Street by his friends and beloved, even by those whom he believed to be his enemies.

His oratorical gifts were the outgrowth of his nature. They were enhanced by a melodious voice. Perhaps the greatest charm of his speech was its naturalness. He spoke as if without effort, he indulged in repetitions and di-

faculty that swayed Parliament as with a Jove-like years 1780-82 saw him at the height of his power afterwards remarked that no one could realize the oratory who had not heard him before his unat with Lord North in 1783, after which event he al on the defensive: "the mouth still spoke great th swell of soul was no more." How great must b blunders and indiscretions, both in public and p have blighted a career of so transcendent a promis

The figure of Edmund Burke belongs rather to literature and political philosophy than to that of p Great in thought and great in his powers of oratory to impress the House of Commons, or the public speeches were too ornate, too overburdened with reasoning, to please an audience that is plain, prac to be impressed more by the speaker himself than b of his arguments or the beauty of his style. In a lacked the indefinable gift which Chatham, Fox, a so abundantly possessed—that of personality. His the forceful massiveness of that of Fox, and it want of the younger Pitt. Moreover his voice was harsh, clumsy. His philosophic love of wedding facts to p led him to soar to heights where the question at i like a speck and votes a vulgar impertinence. Wou his speeches were far too long. The fullness and r delights us to-day then had the effect of emptyin The result of it all was the decline of his influen crease of his irritability, Celtic vivacity leading h once shrilly to chide friends who sought to pull hi seat. These failings, together with the number of hi

of its opposition to Lord North, was Chatham. They had neither organization in general they inherited the imperious traditions of that great leader. The Rockingham group for parliamentarism the royal prerogative; but, like the Revolution, the indefiniteness of their action to their following; and Pitt, himself to this group, rivalled Fox in economic and parliamentary.

The leader of the Chathamites was had been driven into opposition by King at the time of the Wilkes. Their character are very diverse. Burke was as "this wicked man, and no less wicked hypocritical," his chief crime being to the Whig party. Few persons would have Irishman, who, on these lower levels dull his eagle glance. Shelburne was and political thinkers of the time. Inspired men by the splendour of his hospitality as a scholar and philosopher, and his of his keen and supple intellect. He never lacked courage. Yet there is something about Shelburne. His speech came and easily from the affable to the suspicious distrust. His enemies accused him of Malagrida, a well-known Portuguese

We may note here that Pitt either

much to the earl. He was one of the first to espouse the Trade principles of Adam Smith; he was chiefly responsible for the terms of peace of 1782-3; and the admiration of Franklin for him largely conduced to the signature of the preliminaries with the United States. Posterity has accorded to him a far higher place than was allowed by the ignorance or pettiness of his contemporaries. Such was the least that Pitt attached himself.

On 25th January 1781 Shelburne protested against the overbearing conduct of our Government in the capture of Dutch merchantmen before the outbreak of the war, inveighed against the policy of the Ministry as fatal to the welfare of the Empire. Finally he declared that the tactics of Government had proved that the conquest of the American colonies, if it could be accomplished, would have fatal results at home; that he would be better pleased to see the country free, though curtailed in power and wealth, than to see it in a state of increasing greatness, if greatness were to be purchased at the expense of her constitution and liberty. The speech rang true in the ears of Chatham; and it awoke responsive echoes in the mind of his son.<sup>1</sup>

Within the space of five weeks Pitt proved that his speech was of the highest value. In a maiden speech, which has since borne away the palm from the first efforts of the great orators of all time, he gave proof of those astonishing powers of nature seemed to have implanted in a state of maturity, which age and experience were to perfect them; but they threw upon his hearers an impression of wonder as at something which was not natural in a youth of twenty-one years. This feeling was made more natural as the speech dealt with economic subjects.

an electoral system which enlist citizen and called on him to re being the natural time of rene theorist, Jebb, might go further new Parliament for each session the ballot, equal electoral are Yet their arguments would hav strain of war taxes, the dullness placemen high in office. Whe felt the pinch of hard times, matter of the most urgent conc

It was in support of Burke's p of the King's Civil List and for Pitt made his maiden speech in At once he lifted the subject said, would have come with me to the public service, had it spr isters ought themselves to have His Majesty desired to participa

They ought to consult the glory in the hearts of his people, by abat necessity. . . . The abridgment can be no abatement of royalty. inconsistent with retrenchment and time of necessity and of common on the reduction of expense; and vation of the House that econom to national salvation.

He next ventured on an argu assumption of the royal gracio in his first period by asserting the bill was

The reduction of the influence the last Parliament, by an express ing, and that it ought to be dimi to be dreaded, because more see

After referring briefly to this delicate subject, he rebuked those who ridiculed the proposal on the ground that it would effect a saving of only £200,000 a year; as if the present crisis were too great to be benefited by such a sum as if, when millions were being spent, there were not to be thought of thousands! Finally he declared that the sum had been granted by Parliament to His Majesty, not as a gratification, but in order

to support the power and the interests of the Empire, to maintain its grandeur, and pay the judges and the foreign ministers, and to do justice. . . . The people, who granted that revenue, at the exigencies of the occasion, were justified in resuming a power of pressing demand of an altered situation. They clearly had the right, but they exercised it with pain and regret. They approached with hearts afflicted at the necessity of applying for royal gratifications; but the request was at once loyal and patriotic. It was justified by policy, and His Majesty's compliance with the request was inculcated by prudence as well as by affection.

Admiration of the perfect manner in which the speech was delivered seems to have blinded contemporaries to its value as a political pronouncement. Certainly in his delivery it was remarkable. No speech ever won more general and immediate praise. Burke declared the young orator to be not a chip of the old block but the old block itself. Fox hurried up to offer his congratulations on the young man's triumph, and further showed his regard by proposing that he should be a member of Brooke's club—a connection which he maintained unbroken through life. Lord North described the speech as the finest that had ever been delivered in the House of Commons.

a speech—that was the time when V  
 beforehand in framing elegant *junct*  
 dicts quoted above imply in a young  
 profusion of gifts and graces no less  
 of judgment which harmonized the

Alas, the reader of to-day cannot  
 his diction, instinct with the fervour  
 the sagacity of manhood. The print  
 nature of the spell cast on listeners  
 harmonious gestures, musical cadence  
 of inspiring thoughts. No great spe  
 eminently literary quality, such as s  
 of Burke, can be appreciated apart f  
 man who gives life to the words. A f  
 oratory summed up his chief impress  
 that there was something in the sp  
 “that the man was infinitely greater  
 be so, if the speaker is to keep atte  
 look-out for new effects and charms.  
 in all admiration. The hearer, to be  
 wafted up to that state of ecstasy  
 beauties is intensified by the expect  
 come. Shakespeare has once for all  
 bliss in the young and eager love of

What y

Still betters what is done. W  
 I'd have you do it ever.

Some such wealth of gifts the Co  
 in Pitt in that springtide of hope.  
 vest of joy. Ours is but a lean after

The reader, who naturally think  
 this speech than the manner of it  
 pressed by the boldness of some of  
 member should venture to remind  
 the King's control over the Civil I

King and the Church) that the hypothetical contract between prince and people empowered the latter to enter into possession of property which was held on their behalf. The sentiments expressed in Pitt's speech enable us to gauge the astonishment of the world at the young orator at the close of 1783 became first Lord of the Crown.

His second speech, delivered on 31st May, was more effective than the first, though it marks an advance in argumentative power and the handling of details. Colman proposed that the commissioners who supervise the public accounts should be chosen from the House of Commons. In a hostile speech from Lord North, Pitt rose to oppose the motion. He pointed out how essential this proposal was to the maintenance of the power of the Commons. He said thus:

Every branch of the legislature has something peculiar to it, and to characterize it; and that which at once gives to the House of Commons its elevation and its power is the elevation of the Commons House of Parliament is the strings of the national purse, and are entrusted with the power, first of granting the money, and then of controlling its expenditure. To delegate this right, then, is a violation of them their chief consequence in the legislature, and of their other privileges, they cannot surrender or delegate without a breach of the constitution.

Tracking the Prime Minister into detail after he had begged the House to pass the motion as necessary for the prosperity of the land and as a pledge of further reform.

But would he if the motion is rejected, and the old



The young William Pitt has another day, on the commission of and tore him limb from limb. I think such a rival, with an unspot if a Pitt and Fox should again be too, one would hope some genuin

So far as we know, not a oration, for the division list sh motion and only forty-two for of Pitfour, a faithful supporter sion confessed that he had o own conviction, and that wa Many members, while lacking admission, acted with equal fi hence even the best speeches present case no one answered arguments; yet they had no trooped into the lobby at the h of forty-three the Commons d be requested to show his benev

The third effort of the you came about, apparently withou a debate on the motion of Fox ate peace with our American part of his speech Pitt warml claimed that Chatham had in his eagerness to clear his his (Chatham's) conduct on th consistent. After this doubt

kind. The mischiefs, however, recoil on the unhappy country, who are made the instruments by which the ends of its authors are effected.

He continued in the same vehement strain, and impressed the House less than before, Selwyn giving credit that he was "a promising young man." The speech, indeed, sound somewhat forced; and its declamation turgid to be effective. On this occasion "the Opposition" once more triumphed, by 172 votes to 99.

In the middle of July, after the close of the session on the western circuit, but the notices of his speech meagre. The only reference that I have found to his life is in a letter of 29th August 1781 to his friend, Meeke:

I have this circuit amassed the immense sum of thirty thousand pounds, the least expense either of sense or knowledge. . . . I have taken town with the fullest intention of devoting myself to the service of my country, and getting as much money as I can, notwithstanding my opposition to the House of Commons, and (which is a much more important consideration) to Goostree's itself. Adieu.

As a proof that Pitt did not merely play with the Opposition, I may quote this sentence from his letter to Meeke:

I have for many reasons chosen to be only a friend, and not a member, of Shelburne's Administration, and am at present to continue a lawyer as you are to commence one.<sup>1</sup>

Pynsent, and in Pretymán's prim coterie no experience of the varied jostling loves: and nature had not dowered him that makes up for the defects of training. He remained somewhat of a stranger in London, in Downing Street, and still more so in his country, at Hayes, Wimbledon, or Holwood; but a spell on him, and his life was the poorer. He had somewhat of that character in Dickens, who, though naïve and jovial, when he retired to his retreat in Walworth Road and the mimic garden, yet always fixed his features in a sternness as he went forth citywards. So, too, there was a certain man of affairs, and the lovable, delightful, who could have mixed up the two men and made a pound; but this was not to be.

Lincoln's Inn and the law did little for him, though the story, recounted in the previous chapter, of a lectural duel with Gibbon at a dinner in 1848, and the Gordon Riots shows that even then he was a bold and witty repartee which gained him the reputation of an admitted autocrat of the table. Why he did not get into general society is hard to say, but his shyness and awkwardness, on which Wilberforce had held him aloof.

Certainly the temptations of the West were a passing allurements. He felt no desire, but he was to associate with the gambling *coterie* of the West, at Almack's. His preference for bright society, which naturally linked him with those who

Grenville), Pepper Arden (Lord Alvanley), and R. S. Carrington).

That was the age when the bestowal of titles was a means of influence used by the Crown for the discharge of its prerogatives. Wilberforce late in life remarked that half of the Peers had received their titles during the reign of George III, and certainly, if we look at the circle of Pitt's friends we find that only he and seven others remained common to the reigns of George III, George IV, and William IV. These were Banks, Edwards (afterwards Sir Gerard Noel), T. Steele, General Smith, Wilberforce and Windham, and a somewhat later date.

These and a few others, about thirty in all, formed what has been termed Pitt's Club. They met first at a house in Pall Mall, but afterwards occupied rooms in the premises of a Goostree, which later on were used as the Shakespeare Club. Opposition to Lord North's Ministry was one of the chief occupations of this coterie; but in pre-revolutionary days, when a political club was almost unknown, conviviality had its place at Goostree's. One who was in George Selwyn's confidence once thought the ideal aimed at in Pitt's little society was "a small society of young men in Opposition, and of a high tone in their admissions; as they discourage gaming, and, if possible, their club will not do any harm to the Government, and probably not subsist a great while." In February 1781, Pitt himself refers to Pitt as having formed a "society of young men, who are to fight under his banner . . . and that they will meet at Goostree's." Clearly, then, this club was political in part. Pitt spent much of his time there, supping at the

round of social triumphs, which drew from the P would come at any time attractive was his power what most of all endeavored raillery of his conversation chivalry which shone in afterwards declared him Englishmen she had known exuberant Genevese was could not know the warm frame, or the sensitiveness one of the chief uplifting of his life he expressed intellectual conversation needless, when that gift whose life at some point of them, indeed, were around on mind must have helped which were to be devoted mankind.

From the pages of V tantalizingly brief, alas among his intimates the pride.

He was the wittiest man himself, had at all times been struck by the unwonted association of ideas seemed at once produce whatever

ways than one. Firstly it shows that the fashionable vice of the age had crept into Goostree's more than was known by our author or else Selwyn's reference to the club belonged to a later date when Pitt's resolve to have done with gambling, and the influence of Wilberforce at having suddenly won a large sum from his cunning friends, had availed to curb the passion for it in the society. The difference of the two friends in temperament was equally noteworthy. In Wilberforce the resolve to break away from gambling was the first sign of awakening of a sensitive conscience, which, though dulled by gaieties, was thenceforth to assert itself more and more and finally to win over the victory of his energies.

Pitt also felt the fascination of play in a manner which was due to the eagerness of his animal instincts; but the awakening in his case seems to have been due to self-respect and also to a sense of what he owed to the State. How could he, who had early vowed himself to the service of his country, dull his mind and tarnish his name by indulgence in an insidious and debasing vice? The career of Charles James Fox, we may believe, had already been a warning to the young aspirant. In any case, by an exercise of that imperious will, which controlled all his vehement impulses, he crushed at once and for ever the entangling desires, and came forth fancy-free from that domain, saved by his ennobling resolve to serve England.

In another sense—a less important one, it is true—Pitt was the most unfortunate man of his age. All his friends were aware that he was a delightful talker and the most charming of companions. But there their information ends. Not one of them had the Boswellian love of detail which enables us to picture

classics merely in order to provide elegantia. The theme has been embroidered by certain picture the Whig statesman as the disinterested patriot, and Rome, and Pitt as a kind of money-grubber. The modern biographer, if he were to study these persons, instead of copying from the tradition of that time, would investigate for themselves the truth through the partisan spitefulness of all such writers. The original copies of Pitt's copies of the classics preserved at Oxford would tell not only of his frequent perusal of them, but of the interest it brought, as evinced by marginal comments, to the Foxite myth of the classical tags!

The passage from Wilberforce's Diary tells us that Pitt to have been well primed with Shakespeare. He must have had the mental agility and tact which were to flower from that rich garner. Ill though he was, Pitt's oratorical efforts, I doubt whether any one of his speeches if we could have seen him make of some of the evenings spent by him at the Swan and the Boar's Head.

Concerning his ordinary talk we only know from his family by his gaiety, even amidst the darkest days. In that terrible year 1793, when England was engaged in the death grapple, Lady Chatham referred to his "spirits"; and she speaks of him as not only cheerful, but "whom rested the destinies of kingdom." He explains the source of this buoyancy of spirit by the firmness of his intentions and the strength of his feelings from feeling any oppression from the world.

Here we see the secret of that cheerful confidence of his friends. His high spirits were in part, no doubt, inherited from him by the ever confident Chatham; but the outcome of his own conscious rectitude was also. It came the brightness and sincerity which shone in his conversation as also in his life. Another characteristic of Wilberforce insisted was his strict truthfulness. It was attributed to his self-respect and to the purity of his nature. Yet there was no taint of priggishness. Wilberforce describes him as "remarkably cheerful."

question, nor yet holding forth like some others [Windham here hinted at]. He was always ready to hear others as well as to talk himself." <sup>1</sup>

Obviously, then, Pitt's conversation was free from some of the defects which mar the efforts of professional talkers. He never used the sledge-hammer methods by which Dr. Johnson too often won an unfair advantage; he scorned to make feigned incidents or grossly exaggerated accounts whereby small wits gain a passing repute. His speech, in private and public, seems to have resembled a limpid stream, the overflow of a mind richly stocked and a nature at once calm and affectionate.

Sometimes the stream raced and danced along, as appears from an entry in the diary of George Selwyn, in March 1791,

When I left the House, I left in one room a party of young men who made me, from their life and spirits, wish for one night to be with them. There was a tablefull of them drinking—young Pitt, Lord Manners, Berkley, North, etc., singing and laughing *à gorge déployée*: some of them sang very good catches; one Wilberforce, a M. of P., sang the best.

This is only one of many signs that nature had bestowed on Pitt social gifts and graces which under more favourable conditions would have made him the centre of a devoted circle of friends. True, he was too shy and modest to figure as a party man like Dr. Johnson; too natural to pose as did the literary men of Strawberry Hill; too prudent to vie with Fox as the champion and gamester of a great club. But in his own way and in his own sphere he might have carried on those honourable traditions which have invested the life of St. Stephen's with literary



in quick succession the dispute which, after two false alarms, such a period how could a de his faculties, either political or nature Pitt showed signs of the premature and incessant strain his country of the full fruition.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE PEACE WITH AMERICA

Since the accession of our most gracious sovereign to the throne, we have seen a system of government, which may well be called a reformation.—JUNIUS, Letter to the Duke of Grafton, 8th July 1769.

James I was contemptible, but he did not lose an American grandson sold us, his younger lost us—but we kept ourselves. I run to meet the ruin—and it is coming.—HORACE WALPOLE, 11th September 1781.

IN the autumn of the year 1781 occurred a series of events which brought Pitt for a time into open opposition to the King. As we have seen, he had not hesitated to invite the King to enter the path of Economical Reform which was odious to him. But now the divergence of their opinions seemed hopeless. For if Pitt inherited the firmness of his father and Grenvilles, George III summed up in his person the inflexibility characteristic of the Guelfs and the Stuarts. The firmness, the blending of which with foresight and industry produces the greatest of characters, was united in George III with narrowness of vision, absorption in the claims of the crown, and a pedantic clinging to the old and traditional. Co-

intriguing woman, who instilled into him as well as reign. That advice accorded with his nature, which, though torpid, was yet masculine.

As will appear in the sequel, George II's peculiaristics which made him a formidable opponent. His mental endowments were partly made up for by his character, and still more by his determination. He was dogged—a quality dear to the British. His private virtues, his homely good sense, his temper generally genial, and a courage which never failed in many ways a pattern king for a plain king's times.

Unhappily for him and his people, the king was ordinary. Like his contemporary, Louis XV, he had an intellectual equipment wider than that of a model country squire. In a period when he was others for the infiltration of new ideas, neither great monarchs had the least skill in reading. But, while the royal hunter of Versailles was so, he was defects as frequently to lean too much on his own waver, his equally Boeotian brother of Windsor. His belief in his prognostications (save sometimes) was and scorned to change his mind. This last appeared in a letter which he wrote to Pitt on 28th March, chiding his Prime Minister for complying with the Opposition, he continues:

My nature is quite different. I never assent to what is proposed is right, and then I keep [*sic*]; the whole is destroyed by afterthoughts, which on all subjects

in the place of the hapless Bourbon whose vacillations did everything in the memorable spring of 1762.

In certain matters George III showed great ability. If he was a statesman, he was a skilled intriguer. Shelburne, himself so in that art, rated the King's powers high, stating that in the familiarity of his intercourse he obtained your confidence and procured from you your opinion of different public characters. He then availed himself of this knowledge to sow dissension.

Further, the skill and pertinacity with which he pulled wires at elections is astonishing. No British monarch has excelled him in his knowledge of the means by which classes of individuals could be "got at." Some of his letters on these points, especially that on the need of making up for the "bad" cast for Fox in the famous Westminster Election of 1784, would lead one to think that George III missed his vocation, which should have been that of electioneering agent of the Tory party. In he almost succeeded in making Windsor and St. James's headquarters of that faction.

In spite of his private virtues, he rarely attached men to him by ties of affection and devotion—the mark of a narrow and self-centered nature. His relations to his sons were of the coolest, and all ministers, except, perhaps, Addington, left him on terms that ranged on dislike if not hostility. The signs of the royal displeasure (as Junius justly observed to the Duke of Grafton) were directly in proportion to the abilities and integrity of the Minister.

This singular conduct may be referred to the profound egotism of the King which led him to view politics solely from his own standpoint, to treat government as the art of manipulation by means of titles, places, and money, and to regard his

appeared in his remark to Lord Malmesbury that the *Illuminés* (the Jacobins of Germany) "wished to see the Jesuits to overthrow all governments and that the Jesuits were the mental equipment of the monarch and the fate of the Empire."

On Sunday, 25th November 1781, news of the Battle of Red Bank which sealed the doom of Lord North's ministry came to him with rather less than seven thousand men against the Franco-American forces at Yorktown. The British were not heavy enough to daunt a really united America. In Britain of that year, weary of the struggle for the sake of its justice and its utility, the effect of the news was that North, on hearing the news from his cousin, the Marquis de Germain, received it "as he would have received a blow to his breast." He threw up his arms and passed the day in his room, exclaimed wildly: "Oh, God! it is all over." He may believe Wraxall,<sup>2</sup> was the ejaculation of his minister. He had been the unwilling tool of his sovereign and of the American colonists.

While Lord North, the Parliament, and the King were desirous of ending the war, the King's ministers expressed opinion, that it would be total ruin to the British to give way in the struggle, seeing that a great part of the British to "moulder" must be annihilated.<sup>3</sup> He retired to his post, and allowed the King's speech to be read at the autumn session to be only slightly altered. The session ran as follows:

No endeavours have been wanting on my

First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Sandwich, was unfair. They were little more than puppets moved by him, and he was responsible ultimately for the bad conduct of the army and navy, and was sole cause for the continuation of the war. No one imagined (so Romilly wrote on 21 Jan. 1781) that the war would go on after the disaster at Yorktown.

In the ensuing debates on the King's speech, Fox made an effective attack on Ministers, upbraiding them with the inconsistency of their statements and the obscurity in which they shrouded their plans. For himself, with his profound conviction as to the need of promptly terminating the war, he urged them to state clearly what line of conduct they meant to pursue. This last challenge went home because the language of the Government was openly inconsistent, that of the Lord Advocate being hardly different from the views held by the Opposition. In fact it was now said that there were three points of view: Government benches, the King's, Lord North's, and Dundas, shading off from war *à outrance* to something like conciliation with America.

Nevertheless, the House (as Fox wrote in his letter of 17 Dec.) was "tenacious of places and pensions," and at first continued to support the Government by substantial majorities, but a type of crisis like Selwyn wrote early in December that if the present conduct of the Ministry were not changed, they would soon be undone. Nervousness about his sentence made the prophet. Not only was the majority breaking into two, but the Opposition was acting well together. This was the result of the Yorktown disaster. Only a few days after the battle, Shelburne, the leader of the Chathamites, had in a speech become the official chief of the Whigs. Rockingham, the

North and Germain began to whisper together. A little placeman, Welbore Ellis, who was sitting down his head to listen. At once Pitt exclaimed, "until the unanimity is a little better restored." The Nestor of the Treasury has reconciled the Agamemnon and the Achilles of the Assembly.

Little by little Lord North's majority dwindled to a single vote on 22nd February 1782, when he brought forward a motion for the termination of the renewal of the motion five days later, a scene of great excitement, declared against him by 215. The Ministry, under pressure from the Opposition for a few days, and, on 8th March, even censured by a majority of ten.

Pitt, who was one of the tellers for the motion in the House, in the course of a fighting speech, said some notable words: "For myself, I could not enter into a new administration; but, were my doing so necessary, I would never accept a subordinate authority of Admiral Keppel, his neighbour, who is said to have repented immediately of this declaration. I have wished to rise and explain or mitigate it, but must surely have been only momentary. I was essentially methodical. His feelings, his lightest jests, were always completely understood. It is therefore impossible to regard so important a statement as the whim of the moment, or to the exaggeration of an orator or unskilful speaker is often guilty. Still, it is clear that he seriously intended to explain away his action. An action would have been wholly repugnant to his characteristics—pride. The declaration was the result of his unwavering self-confidence and of his sense of the Ministry which could be formed must be such as to bring about a time more opportune than the present. It is clear that a monarch so masterful and skilled in the art of government, who is so much more than a mere figurehead, would not have been so easily misled by a single minister." Pitt's speech was a masterpiece of logic and common sense, and it was a masterpiece of statesmanship.

If so, his conduct was well suited to bring about a time more opportune than the present. It is clear that a monarch so masterful and skilled in the art of government, who is so much more than a mere figurehead, would not have been so easily misled by a single minister.

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time was an alternative far preferable to that of retreating to Hanover—a suggestion which he once more threw out to the North. When the struggle between Crown and Commons came to its second phase, it would be time for a young man to take a leading place.

A crisis became imminent forthwith, on the House of Commons passing a declaration that it would "consider as enemies to the Majesty and to this country all who should advise or by any means attempt the further prosecution of offensive war against the continent of America." By this Act the Commons reasserted their undoubted right of controlling the prerogative of the Crown, even in the question of peace or war.<sup>1</sup> The declaration was preliminary to impeachment of Ministers in case they persisted in defying the House.

It also led the King, on 11th March, to send his champion, the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, to consult with Lord Rockingham. The leader of the official Whigs knew that he had the government in his hands, and sought to dictate the conditions on which he would form an administration. They were as follows: "American Independence; no Veto; Establishment Bill; parts of Contractors Bill; Custom House and Excise, etc. Peace in general, if possible; Economy in every branch." The King demurred to these terms, and after eight days the offer expired. Meanwhile Lord North's position in the House was becoming intolerable, and on 20th March he announced the resignation of his Ministry. On going to take leave of the King he was greeted by the following characteristic words: "Remember, my Lord, that it is you who desert me, not I you."

Most sovereigns would now have accepted defeat. But George III. was not a man who could do so. He was a



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national policy, which, while furthering the  
also made for the greatness of the Empire.  
protests against the continuance of the war.  
voice, as Chatham had done, against a  
the tie uniting the colonies to the motherland.  
seem to us now unpractical in view of  
things. Certainly, if we may judge by the  
Pitt, he had overshot the limits of the  
which his chief still observed.

Nevertheless, the Chathamites, albeit a  
group, indeed scarcely a party, might now  
between the throne and the Whig magna  
King, during an interview with Shelburne,  
his dislike of Rockingham, proposed that  
a Cabinet with Rockingham as head, Shelburne  
mediary between the King and the Prime  
burne knew that he could not stand with  
Whigs, the latter had their way at nearly  
most reluctantly consented not to veto  
—a matter on which Rockingham stood  
personal matters, on which George III set  
succeeded. He refused to see Rockingham  
Prime Minister; he insisted on keeping his  
low, as Chancellor, and he fought hard to  
of the royal household unchanged; but,  
North, "the number I have saved is increas  
them was Lord Montagu, the governor of  
Horace Walpole dubbed the King's spy on  
and the only man in whom he (George III)  
The same sharp critic noted that the King  
success, the only artifice in which he had  
of sowing discord. He had openly shown  
Thurlow were his men in the Cabinet; and  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said  
belonged partly to the King and partly to  
very limited sense in which the Whigs were  
the official Whigs sought the support of

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largely to nullify the victory of the Whigs by fomenting dissension in the Cabinet. So astute an intriguer as Shelburne was not likely to chafe at the ascendancy of Rockingham; and the same tactics, while humiliating the Prime Minister, enabled Shelburne secretly to arrange matters according to the royal behests. Shelburne held the secretaryship for Home Affairs, which then carried with it a supervision of the executive at Dublin Castle. He also brought in Dunning (now created Lord Ashburton) with the knowledge of Rockingham) as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and it has been ascertained that he sought to introduce Pitt in the Cabinet with some high office. Which office he had to have is not clear; but Lady Chatham wrote to Shelburne on 28th March in terms which implied an office of Cabinet rank. Here, however, Rockingham protested with success; and the result only the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland was offered, an office which by his previous declaration he had bound himself to refuse.<sup>1</sup> His exclusion from the Cabinet by the influence of the official Whigs served to alienate him from that party and brought him more in contact with men who were beginning to figure as supporters of the royal prerogative.

As a private member, Pitt gave his support to the Ministry; and on 29th April he made a brief but telling appeal for unanimity, "from which the salvation of the nation alone he hoped for." Certainly the Ministry needed the support of all patriots. The prestige of Britain was at the lowest ebb. Beaten alike in the New World and in the Mediterranean, Minorca had recently been recovered by the Spaniards, seemed at the end of her resources. Ireland was in a state of veiled rebellion. The Parliament at Dublin unanimously

did not speak on the subject, change, which in the circumstances aroused in Ireland a storm of opinion. Parliament voted the sum of £100,000. For the present, then, the Irish question was at an end, at least at the cost of many difficulties in the future.

About the same time, the close of the year 1801, the fleet which Rodney gained over the French at the battle of the Grasse near Dominica on 12th August, 1782, had been sent to the West Indian colonies and rested on the coast of the Atlantic ocean. Equally fortunate was the result of the attack on Gibraltar by the French in 1782. The French about the relief of the garrison of the city, the prolonged and desperate struggle, the seizure of the key of the Mediterranean.

The spirit of the nation rose up in 1801. The Government brought forward a Bill for the relief of the poor, which came to little, probably because of the George Gordon riots had aroused the public mind. It took effect in some quarters, but in more important Volunteer Movement.

It is remarkable, as showing the change in the attitude towards civil affairs, that he was solely on the cause of Parliament. This topic at a time of national action of another statesman and that, when Mr. Gladstone introduced the Bill, he was warmly reproached by

free." The plea has been justified by events; and we gauge at its true value the politic daring of the two who sought to meet dangers from without by strengthening the fabric of the Empire at its base.

In the year 1782 the gravity of the crisis was far greater than that of the year 1884; for the storms were beating on dangerously narrow at the ground. Realizing that the House of Commons was too complicated to be handled after an official investigation, Pitt for the present proposed merely the formation of a Committee of Inquiry to report on the best means of carrying out "a moderate but substantial reform." His proposals, and still more the eloquence, aroused great interest; so that on the 7th May a crowd endeavoured to gain access to Whitehall. Many of the "news writers" were excluded, and it was harmful to the printed reports of the speech.<sup>1</sup> Pitt justified his remarks by acknowledging most thankfully the support now to do with a Ministry which desired such a reform, not with one that "laboured to exert the corrupt influence of the Crown in support of an inadequate representation of the people." He assumed it as proven that the House of Commons had received an improper and dangerous bias, which threatened the constitution.

That beautiful frame of government which has made us the admiration of mankind, in which the people are entitled to a distinguished share, is so far dwindled, and has so far departed from its original purity, as that the representatives have ceased to be connected with the people. It is of the essence of the constitution that the people should have a share in the

He then pointed out some of the existing system. There were some or absolutely possessed, by the Treasury was contested solely by a great number of inhabitants in their own right. Scotland is the classical instance] had on the towns,

in the lofty possession of English property, right to bring their votes to market. No other property, and no other stake in the price which they procure for their votes, dangerous of all. So far from consulting in the choice which they make, they are purchasers. . . . It is a fact pretty well known, had no less than seven or eight members of the foreign State in enmity with this country, procure a party of men to act for them, members of that House?

Pitt then warned the Commons that they might soon be found to be as strong as they were grown with our growth, they had been. For years they had maintained a system of worked ruin to the Empire. Finally, at his father on this great subject, to satisfy the longings now with the kingdom, which must carry the. His speech was loudly cheered. Sheridan also seemed to carry the former cases, the undercurrent of

Ministry, and the opposition of the old Whig family to failure his second effort in this direction. Not for of forty-eight years was so favourable an opportunity and then it was a new Industrial England which broke the trammels of an old-world representation.

Undaunted by this rebuff, he spoke on 12th May for the motion of a veteran reformer, Alderman Samuel Shortening the duration of Parliaments. Only one of his arguments has come down to us, namely his contention that the Septennial Act placed undue influence in the hands of the Crown as appeared from the strenuous opposition which the measure of political purity had always offered to the reform measure. Fox spoke for the motion; but Burke, who was persuaded to absent himself from the earlier debate, let loose the vials of his wrath against a Reform of Parliaments whatever shape it came. Sheridan describes him as saying Pitt "in a scream of passion," with the assertion that the measure was just what it ought to be, and that all change was to the welfare of the nation.

Burke's diatribe prepares us for the part which he played during the French Revolution. The man who defected in a Parliamentary system, in which Scotland had 4,000 voters and 45 members, while 191 Cornish villages had 38 members; in which the Duke of Norfolk could have 10 members, and the Nabob of Arcot 7 or 8, while Leeds, Sheffield, and Birmingham remained political outcasts, such a man might well regard the French revolution as the ablest architects of ruin" that the world had ever known. His tirade against short Parliaments carried the House of Commons into a storm of indignation, and he was

second letter the young statesman that committee proposed to act on their behalf. These facts and impressions were produced by Erskine during his defence of sedition early in the Hilarities, a highly effective and probably decisive sentence. The whole incident contrasted between the earlier action which was to be produced by the

Pitt did not speak during the session which alone of all the reform bills passed Parliament in 1782. They were excluding all contractors from the revenue officers, dealt a blow to the corruption.<sup>2</sup> By the other Act some about £70,000 a year, were sworn in influence against both measures by every means to defeat the former. The Economy Bill was shorn of its force by the action of Shelburne and

The difficulty of common discussion of a Bill for the representation (June). Pitt spoke in favour of the Fox opposed it. This was the first in opposite lobbies, though the first intercourse between them. The

Their relations were destined to be an event which opened another period

once referred the proposal to his colleagues, only rejected by the official Whigs. Four of Rockingham's decided friends in the Cabinet—Fox, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord John Cavendish, and Admiral Keppel—demanded that the Duke of Portland should be Prime Minister. Fox's proposal was doubly objectionable; first, because it was then appeared from his conduct at Dublin Castle, of little insight and no strength of character; secondly, because the proposal itself was scarcely constitutional; for the King still has, the right to select his Prime Minister. Nevertheless, Shelburne consented to refer the proposal to George III., who emphatically rejected it. Thereupon Fox and Lord John Cavendish resigned; Shelburne undertook to form a new administration and offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, vacated by Lord John Cavendish, to William Pitt, who accepted it.

The other chief changes were that Thomas Townshend (who was to become Lord Sydney) took the Secretaryship of War, offered by Shelburne, while Fox was succeeded as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by Lord Grantham, and the Duke of Portland was made Lieutenant of Ireland, by Earl Temple. Burke and others marked their attachment to the Whigs by resigning their subordinate offices. It was in face of able, eloquent, and energetic men like these that Pitt took up the burden of office, at the age of twenty three.

The conduct of Fox and his friends in resigning was hotly arraigned. A debate on their action in voting a salary of £3,200 a year to Colonel Barré turned mainly on this question (9th July). Fox, conscious that Barré's pay was a blot on Ministers who had posed as champions of economy, retorted fiercely on his critics, declaring Shelburne a hypocrite to be handling soldiers' salaries for economy which they



Had Fox been satisfied with defending the ground of disagreement with Shelburne his relations to the Chathamites might have been different. But the attack on Pitt's chief was so violent that it required no rejoinders. General Conway defended Shelburne of apostasy, and stated that it was the wish of George III of the need of recognizing the rights of the American colonies; also that the difference between Fox and Shelburne on that point were merely differences of opinion. Pitt expressed his regret at the resignation of Shelburne, and it in the main to a dislike of Shelburne's policy. For himself, he said, he could not resign, and if he were called upon to serve the government (which was not yet confirmed) he would do so to the utmost of his power and capacity and to the utmost of his power. The charges were further discounted by the fact that the other ministers did not resign their seats in the Cabinet.

On reviewing the action of Fox at this time it seems impossible to acquit him of the charge of jealousy and bad temper. His charges against Shelburne respecting the details of the negotiation with America have been refuted, or at least not supported by any eminent authority.<sup>2</sup> Fox must have known that Shelburne had induced George III to a policy of dependence of the American colonies—of the highest order; and if on matters of detail he was mistaken, and if he thought him insincere, meddlesome, and if he thought him unworthy of the confidence of the King, it was his duty to remain loyal to the King, and to curb those tendencies.



valley of the Mississippi,<sup>1</sup> served some British fury kindled by the War. The Act had long been discerned at Westminster, the King using them as pawns in their game for the aggrandizement of the British Empire; and their envoys resolved on their engagement not to treat separately with England. The preliminaries of peace, signed in 1763, accorded to the young Commonwealth the Mississippi boundary on the west, and the larger part of Canada to the north, together with fishery rights on the coast. These terms, including that of the independence of the Indians, were provisional, taking effect whenever peace was made with France and Spain.

The negotiations with France and Spain were complicated by the ill-will now existing between them and the United States. The relief of the garrison of Fort Mifflin, and Howe further disposed them to abate their demands. On the other hand, they knew of the difficulties of the American position, the general desire of the nation for peace. The King was in a complicated state at the end of the year. He was told from a statement of Shelburne that during the negotiations from summoning Cabinet Councils in order to settle the Ministers had indeed differed sharply, but that they were whether Gibraltar should be handed back to Spain, or on that of the indemnity. The King and the Ministers have Porto Rico and West Florida in exchange. Grafton preferred Porto Rico and Trinidad. Keppel (probably also Pitt) objected to the cession of the fortress which had been so stoutly held during the siege.<sup>3</sup>

Such was the state of affairs when, on the 22nd of January, the Government reassembled. On the next day Pitt moved a resolution which exposed him to a reprimand from the House of Commons. Shelburne. Fox pressed Ministers to de-

meaning of the provisional agreements made with the commissioners was the unqualified recognition of the "principle"; and it would form part of the treaty with the powers.<sup>1</sup> Here he overshot the mark. That recognition on the conclusion of treaties with France and Spain, therefore, sent him a rebuke through Shelburne, and, ever, "It is no wonder that so young a man should slip."—We cannot regret the occurrence, for it was anxious Pitt was to have that great question settled.

In the ensuing debates Pitt sharply retorted on quoting from "Hudibras," had accused Ministers of "King speak—

As if hypocrisy and nonsense  
Had got the advowson of his conscience.

The son of Chatham showed something of his reprobating the unseemly jeer of the speaker and did he repelled the further charge of hypocrisy "with contempt." A retort courteous, or humorous, would have been more in place after Burke's raillery; but Pitt, though private, rarely used this gift in the House, probably wished to be taken seriously. In this he succeeded. In name he was leader of the House of Commons. Keeping together a majority was extremely difficult; owing to Gibbon, the Ministry could command only 140 votes, as many as 120 voted with Lord North, 90 with Fox, and drifted about as marketable flotsam. The situation became still late in the year, when rumours began to fly about and Lord North were about to join their discordant voices to the overthrow of the Ministry.

In these circumstances the Shelburne Cabinet rendered the greatest possible service by holding on to office, and pressed through the negotiations with France, Spain, and the United States. Ultimately, the preliminaries of peace were signed on

On the other hand, they gave back to Britain St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat, the islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre and Miquelon, a firmer footing in the Newfoundland fishery, and gave back Senegal and Goree to France; what we had conquered by us, were likewise restored to her largely than France. She retained her Florida and Minorca, and she acquired Sicily, recognizing the reconquest of the Bahama Islands. The Dutch ceded Negapatam but recovered it on other conditions were ultimately ratified by the Treaty of 1763 (3rd September 1783).

Terms so favourable could not have been expected. The Court of Versailles felt the need of peace to repair its shattered finances. It was the shadow of the Revolution of 1789 which warned Louis XVI and his advisers that their adversary while they were in the field. Nevertheless, the Shelburne Ministry deserves credit for making head against internal difficulties, which were far less burdensome than those which had been caused by the Seven Years' War.

This is the light in which they are regarded when the spoils of office rather than party considerations, words and votes of members, the details of administration, welcome opportunity for undermining the Government seemed to be in difficulties. The wavering of those who were chafed by the overbearing diplomacy of Shelburne, began to lead to the resignation of Kessel from the Admiralty, the Duke of Devonshire from the Foreign Office, and the Duke of

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was impossible to bring them in without him. It remained to seek help from the Foxites. Here the bitter peacemaking between Shelburne and Fox complicated the situation both for Shelburne, Fox, and Pitt. But before the fight in Parliament on the burning topic of the hour, Pitt made it known to bring in Fox (11th February). He acted with the knowledge of Shelburne and with the knowledge, and probably the permission, of the King.

Few private interviews have been more important. They depended the fortunes of the Ministry, and to some extent the Empire. If it succeeded, the terms of peace would pass through Parliament. An alliance would also be made between two political groups which had almost the same aims and were held apart only by the personal pique of the King. A union of the best elements of the Whigs and the Tories would tend to curb the power of the King, maintain the Union of the flag, and secure the passage of much-needed reforms. In defeat, or at least the postponement, of these reforms, a disaster must necessarily result from persistence in the misadventure. For the two men themselves that interview was full of grave issues. The repulse of the natural affinities of the King to doom one of them to an unnatural alliance or to opposition.

It must have been with a keen sense of the importance of the crisis that these able men faced one another. The interview was soon over. Pitt stated to Fox the object of his visit; Fox, the Whig leader asked whether it was proposed that Shelburne should remain First Lord of the Treasury; answering in the affirmative, Fox remarked that it was

the man whom for thirteen years he had  
ment of corruption and tyranny. They a

that nothing more was required to be done in  
the Crown by economical reform, and that  
every man should follow his own opinion. M  
the King should not be suffered to be his o  
replied: "If you mean there should not be  
ments, I agree with you. I think it a very ba  
be one man, or a Cabinet, to govern the  
measure. Government by departments was n  
found it so, and had not vigour and resolution  
King ought to be treated with all sort of resp  
appearance of power is all that a King of this c

They then began to consider the question  
offices, and finally decided to oppose the  
the King expressing thankfulness at the p

Thus was formed the famous, or infam  
With the policy of reducing the governin  
it is impossible not to feel much symp  
hitherto governed England without mu  
except from Chatham and Rockingham.  
obstinacy were the chief causes of the A  
now know that during four years he ha  
that work, despite his remonstrances. But  
the new alliance to the public. A shiver o  
the nation when it transpired that Fox ha  
the man whom he had threatened to impe  
sion was never to die away.

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that his present conduct hopelessly impaired the cause of the reformers, in what was at all times an uphill struggle. The whole incident brings into sharp relief the character of the man, which, while rich in enthusiasms, ever led him so frequently to a reckless use of means for the compassing of ends in themselves.

In this instance his recklessness was to be blamed. He seems not to have considered the general effect of the union with a long view. But the public, always prone to harsh judgments and inconsistencies, at once inferred that he joined the coalition order to be revenged on Shelburne for some previous wrong, mainly with the view of snatching at the sword which he had of late so unaccountably cast aside. It was oddly to blend all that was foolish in waywardness with the cunning of an unscrupulous politician. The public argued that such extremes as Fox and North were justified under the overmastering pressure of greed; but patriots the Coalition of 1783 seemed to plunge into the old slough of selfishness from which Chatham had raised her.

The name of Chatham reminds us of the peace of 1757 he framed with his former opponent, the Duke of Newcastle. The two cases have indeed been compared, but they have very little in common. Then the very existence of the country was at stake. She was in the midst of a war grossly mismanaged; and the union of the two Houses of the age with the manipulator of patronage was the only means of avoiding a national disaster. In 1783 hostilities were at an end; the terms of



Northites in the Lower House. North spoke of the restraint which became a man so long of the present humiliations. He fastened on the treaty—the cession of Minorca and the absence of any guarantees for the future. Where he trod with measured steps, Sheridan in with frothy violence. Sheridan declared that he quished completely everything that was glorious for the country"; and his chief branded it as "the disgraceful peace that ever this country had known"; and he trod to the understanding with North, which Fox defended it by quoting the phrase, "*Amicitiae inimicitiae placabiles.*"<sup>1</sup>

Pitt's speech, in reply to Fox, was not without efforts, and Ministers were left in a minority. He called himself, however, four days later devoted to a vote of censure brought against the Administration, his colleague, Lord John Cavendish. The attack was made under cover of a series of resolutions. The House of Commons accepted the peace, with the cessions made to our enemies to be executed on better terms for the American Loyalists. The usual ardour in favour of these mutually disadvantageous terms. After declaring that all who looked at the peace "blush for the ignominy of the national character," he defended his alliance with Lord North. The terms were now changed; they had to deal with the peace. Shelburne, who was "in his nature, habitually an enemy to the privileges of the people," forced "the strongest coalition which has ever

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vanished. In a speech of three hours he traversed the ground of the treaty and reviewed the situation brought about by the recent monstrous Coalition. He fought hard for the peace which the present resolutions imperilled, and still for the maintenance of the honourable traditions of public opinion.

After briefly adverting to the strange part now played by Fox, he continued in terms which showed that he cared more to the nation than to Parliament.

The triumphs of party, Sir, with which this self-appointed champion seems so highly elate, shall never seduce me to any inconsistency; the basest suspicion shall presume to glance at. I will never support political enmities without a public cause. I will never support enmities without the public approbation; nor will I be quarrelled or cast off in the face of this House by one virtuous and dissatisfied member. These, Sir, the sober and durable triumphs of reason over passion, of truth over profligate inconsistency of party violence; these, Sir, the triumphs of virtue over success itself, shall be mine, not only in the present situation but through every future condition of my life, which no length of time shall diminish, which no change of circumstances shall sully.

He then showed that a continuance of war would be a peril and might lead to national bankruptcy; that the terms were not, as at the end of the Seven Years' War, abject and humiliating, but terms of peace, and that those now proposed were a far more reasonable and as could be expected. If we had ceded Florida, we had retained the Bahamas and Providence. While losing Tobago and St. Lucia, we recovered Grenada, Dominica, St. Kitts, and Montserrat. In Africa we should once more hold the best and healthiest settlement. The loss of M



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had listened to that thunder with astonishment and d then asserted that better terms might have been gain ally from the Americans, and declared his belief th Coalition would greatly benefit the country. The F majority of seventeen decided for North and against

In the Lords, Shelburne had a majority of thirteen victory of North and Fox in the Commons led him resign office on 24th February 1783. In this honoura ended Pitt's first tenure of office.

## CHAPTER V

### THE COALITION

Of all the public characters of this devoted (accepted) there is not a man who has, or who deserves.  
—ROMILLY 21st March 1783.

**I**N politics, as in war, victories sometimes are more disastrous than defeats. When triump into ever increasing difficulties, he may lose his good fortune; while, on the other hand, his opponents may lessen their responsibilities, and he to concentrate, double the strength of the

Such was the case with Fox and Pitt. The former was seen by discerning friends to be weak. He owed it to an unprincipled alliance, and to the support of public opinion. Pitt, on the other hand, gloriously, fighting strenuously for terms, the nature of things, his successors could not resist. Accordingly, events worked for him and against him. Only a well organized party can resist the parliamentary strife; and it lay in the nature of place and pension—to say nothing of the fact that should sunder these hungry and unprincipled

It seems probable that the credit of advising the King to appoint Pitt as the new Prime Minister rests with Shelburne. Of course the idea did not originate with Henry Dundas, as he afterwards claimed; for on Monday morning, 24th February 1783, he wrote to Shelburne as follows:

MY DEAR LORD,

I cannot refrain from troubling your Lordship with a letter upon a subject of the most serious importance; and the ground of my addressing you arises from the words which drop from you yesterday morning relative to Mr. Pitt. I did not pay much attention to them when you uttered them, but I have revolved them over and candidly in the course of the day yesterday, and I am now satisfied my own mind that, young as he is, the appointment of Mr. Pitt to the Government of the country is the only step that can be taken at the present moment attended with the most distant chance of success for the Government of this country. . . . He is perfectly new to the Government, against whom no opposition can arise except what may be derived from the desperation of that lately allied faction, which I am persuaded will likewise gradually decline till at last it will consist only of a few silent aristocratical band who assume to themselves the prerogative of appointing the rulers of the kingdom. I repeat it again that I believe the experiment will succeed if His Majesty will try it.

HENRY DUNDAS.

The King warmly welcomed Shelburne's suggestion for Pitt, and urged him to form a Ministry on his own. The young statesman, far from succumbing to the glories of the moment, at once foresaw the difficulties of the proposed Ministry, and requested time for reflection. Dundas sat up with him that night, going through the names of members of the House and calculating the chances of adequate support. In the morning which Pitt wrote to his mother on the 25th, he speaks of the question as turning on that of numbers in the House. On the next day and the morning of the 27th he secured a

of that contest of wills which only King strove hard to gain for his side, who stood between him and the new young Minister with every possible

Nothing [so the King wrote to Shelburne] to depart from the ground he took, the certainty of a majority in the House of Commons to undertake the task; for that it would be impossible if attempted; all I could obtain was that he should as fixed a declaration that, if he cannot obtain the certainty, he shall decline.<sup>1</sup>

We could wish to know more of the mental wrestling of the barrister. Rarely, except perhaps from the King, did I meet with so firm a resolve not to yield. It is reasonable to infer that the reluctance of the King sprang from a deep fund of confidence in the Minister by sufferance of North. Further, why should he take up that of the Sovereign whom he knew to be the cause of all the difficulties? Was it not better that the King's tool should unravel the tangle of the King's thread and Fox for the present command the Government they must govern, as long as they could. The King, of varied kinds, therefore, must have been satisfied, though he promised the King to do so, that he was sure that his resolve was virtually

Other names were then mooted, Pitt and Earl Temple: but, as George

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## THE COALITION

whole month, nothing bent the King's purpose. It was that he was seeking to sow discord among his opponents; this he failed. Finally the Coalition succeeded in imposing its nominee, the Duke of Portland, on the King; but, as the King insisted that his "friend," Lord Thurlow, should continue Lord Chancellor, the duke and his backers broke off the negotiations (18th to 20th March). At once the King sent forth the following curt note—the first in his long correspondence with him.<sup>2</sup>

Queen's House, *March*

Mr. Pitt, I desire you will come here immediately.

Once more, then, the King made his offer to the young man. For five days he sought to bend that stubborn will to the needs of the public service and his own resolve to admit the Duke of Portland and North after their treachery to him. But on 25th March Pitt politely, but most firmly, refused on the same grounds as before. The King thereupon wrote himself much hurt at his refusal to stand forth against the most daring and unprincipled faction that the annals of the kingdom ever produced."<sup>3</sup> Once more he talked of returning to Hanover and leaving to the Coalition the task of governing Great Britain. But on mentioning this scheme to his long-headed counsellor, Lord Thurlow, he is said to have received the illuminating advice that the journey to Hanover was not enough; but the example of James II's travels abroad was the conclusion that the return journey was more difficult. The story is *ben trovato*; but we may doubt whether even the assurance was equal to this ironical dissuasiveness, and



would cure the present evils. On the 21st, with the relic of Shelburne's Ministry, on the 2nd of April the new Ministers began their function declared that he foresaw the end of the Ministry; for when Fox came up for the first time he turned back his ears and eyes just as a tailor does when the tailor he had determined to

The observer augured well. Fox's position, his saddle, and Pitt's determination to stand by their future careers and the course of the man who knows, not only when to act but also how to bide his time. The example of Epaminondas; of Fabius Maximus, Cunctator, in ancient history; of Louis XI, EL DUEGLLO of Orange, Talleyrand, and even of Napoleon's proofs of the power inherent in far-sighted refusal of power in the spring of 1797, Napoleon's prudent reserve in the French Revolution of 1797-8, based as it was on his decision of October 1797: "It is only with prudence and dexterity that obstacles are surmounted and success attained. . . . I see no impossibility in a few years, those splendid results which the enthusiastic imagination catches at, but which a very cool, persevering and positive man can attain." Pitt's great speech of 21st February 1797, his imaginative gifts and ambition of a great office, owing to the stubborn facts of the world, of those cool and calculating instincts, his genius is a balloon devoid of ballast.

held to have betrayed his Whig principles; and his oratorical constituents at Westminster, at his re-election, treated him with a hearing, shouting him down several times. The North, the reviled, seemed incredibly base and unprincipled. The rest, Lord John Cavendish (dubbed by Selwyn "the canary-bird") took Pitt's place at the Exchequer; Montagu became President of the Council, the Earl of Sandwich Lord Privy Seal; and Keppel returned to the Admiralty. The foregoing formed the Cabinet. As the King was fond of his man, Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor's sea commission, Lord Loughborough (formerly Mr. Wilmot, a man apt at betrayal) becoming first commissioner. Lord and Lady Sheridan were rewarded with the subordinate posts of Secretary of the Forces and Secretary to the Treasury. The Whig members were in the ascendant, though North predominated in the House of Commons. Temple was appointed Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, which went, after an unreasoning delay, to one of Fox's boon companions at Brighthelmston. Northampton.<sup>1</sup>

Wilberforce, with his usual power of hitting off the subject, declared that the Fox-North Coalition inherited the vices of its progenitors, the violence of Fox and the corruption of North. This was the general opinion. As for George III, he was against this unnatural union. He could not mention the name of Fox without falling into the flurried incoherent kind of rant which afterwards marked the on-coming of attacks of lunacy. His hatred of Fox, as the man who led astray the Prince of Wales into the equally odious paths of gambling and dissipation, fed the King's animosity against the Viceroy, as the foe of the constitution. But the vials of his wrath were poured forth on North, for his betrayal of the royal cause. He lavished on him for a decade. On 1st April, George III. told Temple that he hoped the nation's eyes would soon be opened to the

the greed of the Coalition was : became piquant in the extreme. A situation must have helped, in Pitt's pointment of retiring from office. east. Wilberforce's journal shows and a joyous visitor to Wimbledon spring-sowing of the flower-beds fragments of Ryder's opera hat. (

Other and more practical fruit efforts for Parliamentary Reform, was by the alliance of Whigs and Acting not as a partisan (for, just formed the House that he belonged a motion on 7th May for the Re occasion London and Kent seen motion, and the approaches to galleries were thronged by petition freeholders of Kent, the household the electors of Westminster (the great numbers to give weight to the noted that Kent and Essex had 12, of counties) in favour of Reform.

In due course Pitt rose to bring that the disasters of the past year "people" to turn their eyes inward cause of the evil. No one could in the constitution was the second excited on the House of Commons three plans had been proposed, one to every man—a proposal

to every man, and the scheme was "a mere speculation that may be good in theory but which it would be chimerical to endeavour to reduce to practice." It should be noted. For they refute the slander that it came from the cause of Reform in and after 1790, when it was on the Jacobin theory of universal suffrage, which has since been repudiated.

Pitt's second proposal of Reform was to abolish "rotten boroughs." He confessed that they were "a deformity in the system, but he felt that they could not be removed without endangering the whole pile. The third proposal seemed better, namely, to add a number of members for the metropolis. He summed up his contentions in three propositions: (1) for the prevention of bribery and undue elections; (2) the disfranchisement of boroughs where it was proven; (3) an addition to members of counties and the metropolis. The details of these proposals were to be in a Bill, if the Resolutions were carried. They met with opposition from Fox, while their very limited character, which was ridiculed, commended them to Dundas and Thomas Pitt, who previously had opposed Reform. As a pledge of his support, Thomas Pitt offered to surrender his rights over the borough of Old Sarum.

All was of no avail. North, Colonel Luttrell, Lord Bute, and others declaimed against any change in the constitution. The House by a majority of one hundred and four reprobated the dangerous spirit of innovation abroad. Doubtless the demoralization of the Whigs was inevitable. Pitt himself spoke with less than his usual energy, and the change of positions from the new arrangement was not without its effect.

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office received a salary of £250 a year, but in gifts, and other clerks in the same post of the Post Office raised his salary of £100 by a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. charge on all packet method of redress. The expense of Lord North during his term at the Treasury one item being £340 for whip-cord! Burke hoped to save the nation £40,000 a year rendered remarkable by a speech from the Opposition was smarting under the censure of the House for dishonest officials, and had betrayed the weakness of his nature by drearily ranting until Fox pulled him to his seat. He now rallied the little perquisites of little men in little things, the greatest abuses to exist in the office of the Treasury seemed to have that nice olfactory nerve of a ball of horsedung a thousand miles away, affected by the stench of a dunghill in London. Burke, however, failed to substantiate this odorous simile. The measure passed the Commons but perished in the Lords. Keppel denied that the Admiralty; the Duke of Portland declared that reforms would cost as much as the measures they declared that they would be highly profitable. The fate befell a measure, which Pitt warmly supported, the expenses at elections.

In his speech on Lord John Cavendish's motion for a practical knowledge of finance which was necessary to expose the weak points of his successor, Fox further pointed out the best means for carrying out reforms on the most favourable terms. His reputation was at its height the session; and if his speeches, after the first of February, lacked brilliance, they exhibited a firm grasp of affairs.

Ministers, on the other hand, lost ground by their blunders and the widening of the gulf

already so strained that the Ministry—"my son's M  
King sometimes called it—must have known the qu  
thorny. The tastes of George III being as frugal as  
son were extravagant, a clear understanding wit  
seemed the first essential to a settlement. Yet Fox  
porters in the Cabinet prevailed on the other Mini  
reluctantly, to allot the sum of £100,000 a year to the  
that, too, without consulting the King. According  
Walpole, the proposal came to light during a casual c  
between the King and the Duke of Portland on 11th  
account given in the "Fox Memorials" seems, howe  
vict George III of inconsistency.<sup>1</sup> In any case, he  
claimed against the proposal, as showing that Minis  
their professions of economy, "were ready to sacrific  
interests to the wishes of *an ill-advised young man*";  
his readiness to allow the Prince £50,000 a year fro  
List, so as not to burden the public. This was the s  
himself had received as Prince of Wales; and he  
ground in proposing to support his bachelor son c  
allowance.

This was the mine sprung upon the Ministry on 1  
promised to end their existence; and Fox believ  
King would seize the opportunity to dismiss Minist  
Parliament, and appeal to the country on the cry o  
paternal authority, and no mischief-making between  
son. Doubtless he would have done so but for the  
compliance of the Prince of Wales with his express  
an act of submission due less to the filial devotion o  
than to his desire to save his favourite from a crushi  
the public. Ultimately on 23rd June the House

in that they bound him down to an amount he felt no scruple in exceeding. The Prince of Wales's debts, and even that in no small measure from the bad luck of June 1783.

The King, also, as we can now see from the Dropmore Papers have thrown on every affair more closely than ever in order for the Pitts and Grenvilles. But his prudence. He was resolved not to exchange another. If Pitt came in, it must be on the Crown. George saw Temple after his return of State at Dublin Castle, and soon told Pitt as to their ideas on a future Ministry.

There was one grave objection to the Reform. Seeing that the Coalition Ministry on this subject, the King strove to ensure the part of its successor. He therefore sent the bargainer, Thurlow, to see Pitt and Fox. The ex-Lord Chancellor invited him to dine on 19th July, five days after the end of the very wary in his overtures, and Pitt told him that he had a very good meal, but little of real value. First he depicted the situation as favourable to the King, who had gone on, he admitted the Foxites to office. Then perhaps he would become reconciled to the Reform. To add that that was impossible, especially the Prince's allowance. The "King's Speech"

we sought. But that if they did, and we could form a permanent consistent with our principles, and on public ground, we decline it. I reminded him how much I was personally attached to Parliamentary Reform on the principles I had publicly explained. I should support on every seasonable occasion. I treated as a question any idea of measures being taken to extend [Crown] though such means as are fairly in the hands of Ministers doubtfully be to be exerted. And I said that I wished those I might act, and the King (if he called upon me) to be fully on the grounds on which I should necessarily proceed. . . .<sup>1</sup>

This is a declaration of the highest importance. I was not very explicit, Pitt certainly was; and it is clear that he fathomed the intentions of George III. They were, to use the present unsatisfactory state of things as an excuse to a patriotic and ambitious young man to come forward as a "King's friend," taking up the place which Norton had left vacant. Shelving the problem of Parliamentary Reform, Pitt was to govern for the King and by the King's influence. The young statesman saw the snare, skillfully avoided it, and let it be understood that, if he took office, he would be on his own terms, not on those of the King. For the alliance of the Grenvilles, and all who detested the Ministry, he needed not to supplicate the royal favour; more he would bide his time, until the King sued for his services. Temple in his reply warmly commended his sound and honourable conduct, acknowledging that Pitt was in favour of Reform, so long as there was any chance of success.

A time of skillful balancing now ensued. The King, appointed at Pitt's independent attitude, took Temple



as much to Thurlow, who passed it on. The news was well known when Pitt went for sea-bathing in August.<sup>1</sup>

Other causes, however, besides the desire to postpone the crisis. The Cabinet, for example, was in no haste to sign the definitive treaty. The interval of uncertainty to be some months in office. There was also some hope that the Emperor was intent as she was on plans against Turkey, and thus end our isolation.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Cabinet in England, as well as the changing ambition of the Emperor, to postpone the final settlement; but the treaty was signed on 3rd September at Versailles. The Emperor, from the preliminaries which Ministers had signed, was so violently attacked. Apart from a statement of the loss of British property in the ceded territory, a better definition of our rights in the ceded territory, a material change. The American Lord Grenville, who Burke had so passionately pleaded, was not so satisfied as in the preliminary treaty. The Emperor, after months of bargaining secured no better terms than Spain than Shelburne had arranged. The Emperor blamed their predecessors for failing to secure an agreement with the United States, not for the failure. Finally, the Preliminaries signed on 2nd September, showed that Fox, who had claimed against the expected retrocession of the Dutch, now consented to it. Negapatnam, the post, was retained.

These actions exposed Ministers to the charge of inconsistency in ratifying conditions of peace which they had inveighed in unmeasured terms. Fox rallied them on this topic, and then, in the heat of partisan warfare, to the heights of passion, uttered these words:

Parliament. I am acquainted with the difficulty of the business, but will not attribute the delay hitherto to any neglect on the part of the Ministers. I am willing to ascribe it to the nature of the business, but I expect that the business will soon be brought forward, piece-meal, but that one grand system of commerce, built up by the circumstances of the times, will be submitted to the House for consideration.<sup>1</sup>

This is the first sign of Pitt's resolve to give effect to the teachings of Adam Smith, and to aid in founding on the ruins of our old colonial system a fabric far sounder and more economical. It is further significant, as showing the absence of opposition in the Opposition, that the address to the King for the peace was carried unanimously.

We have looked ahead in order to glance at Pitt's movements respecting the treaties of peace concluded on 3rd September. Let us turn to his movements during the vacation. Pitt went down to Brighthelmston to take some dips in the sea, and then struck away westwards towards Somerset for a fortnight, to Lady Chatham at Burton Pynsent. Next, after a short stay at Kingston Hall, Bankes's country house in Dorset, in company with Wilberforce and Eliot, he returned to London on 7th September in order to look into the political situation. He found that the Ministry was losing favour mainly because the King refused to grant any peerages at their request. From this, however, there was no sign of a collapse. The great petrel of politics, Lord Thurlow, was abroad; and Pitt considered it tactful not to linger about town, but to go to the Continent. Before setting out, he attended the King at St. James's on 10th September; and the King inquired of him "at the time of his return" in a rather significant manner."<sup>2</sup>

On the next day he met Wilberforce and Eliot at Carlton House, and on the 12th they crossed to Calais. He found the journey to Reims more comfortable, and the appearance of the

tions. As a result they were through the London bankers to a grocer, whom they found raisins. Somewhat crestfallen to their inn. Not for ten c. intendant of Reims, and the Grace was by no means an in Wilberforce's letters as age, who played billiards li also met an Abbé de Lagea used to entertain them by v To him, early in their acqu that there, in the middle of that was even tolerable. Th at his house with the best hours of breezy talk.

Pitt, so we learn from Wil visitors on these occasions. but music," readily caught t he soon conversed with ease *mots* are preserved by Wil inquiry about his opinion "Sir, you have no political affairs, you have more tha durability of the English c "The part of our constitut rogative of the King and th None of Pitt's sayings is m it was long before the storm the British monarchy had

England allowing itself to be governed by Fox, a man deficient in private character, Pitt replied: "Ah! you have been under the wand of the magician." Out of the variations of wit and gaiety with which Pitt brightened weeks' sojourn in France, we catch a glimpse of the sparks alone. Doubtless the weakness of Wilberforce that time accounts for the tantalizingly meagre entries in his diary; but, seeing how elusive a figure Pitt is, we are thankful even for these slight jottings.

We are therefore left wondering about the intercourse of the three Englishmen and Talleyrand, who was then in France with his uncle, the Archbishop of Reims. Of their conversations—for where Talleyrand was dullness could dwell—we know nothing. Talleyrand and Pitt, we are instructed one another in their mother tongues and exchanged ideas, especially on literature and the advantages of Free Trade.<sup>1</sup> What a subject for Landor, this interchange of views between the ablest young men of the age, who agreed on the essentials of politics and yet were soon to be forced into bitter conflict! How different the future might have been had Talleyrand had enough strength and straightforwardness to become chief of the French Republic!

The stay of the three friends at Reims ended on October 10, owing to Pitt's desire to reach Paris in time to see General Pitt Rivers, a Secretary of the Treasury, who had been travelling on the Continent with Lord Thurlow. There can be little doubt that Pitt hoped to hear from him news respecting the situation in London; for they had confidential converse, in which Pitt had over Rose completely to his side.<sup>2</sup> At Paris he had in the persons of Lafayette, Benjamin Franklin, and many others

mercial and colonizing power. Strong in and Spain, with her friendship courted Prussia, Sweden, and Holland—at times b—France seemed to be high above the re The prestige of the monarchy was as yet of the Diamond Necklace. The factious ments had scarcely begun; and the days at Fontainebleau must have realized the beauty in which Burke has enshrined M tering like the morning star, full of life a

By her side at Court and in the hunting opposite, her husband. What the friends in hunting attire is shown by Wilberforce's strange figure in immense boots." Whether there is doubtful, for his words were ever bade his conversing much with foreigners. her usual vivacity and wit, rallied them grocer, at Reims. The courtiers often of Wilberforce recalls), "and he behaved w he was sometimes a little bored when the Parliamentary Reform." At Fontainebleau at dinner in company with the American. Again we long to know of the converse men. Only one scrap survives, namely, Frenchman, whom his admirers termed "the worlds," that his principles were too democratic to burst upon Western Europe apparent.

Necker, the Minister who in 1789 aspired to control the storm, was desirous of

to the care of a husband who had made for himself a good name, I also could have wished for a son-in-law to whose care I could have committed your poor father, and who would feel the full weight of my old age. You were not disposed to give me this satisfaction. Well, I am forgiven.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly the match was to have been of an eleemosynary character; and all who rejoice in the eager exuberance of Mme. de Staël cannot be surprised at her refusal, of a young girl, to become a testamentary asset in the hands of her father. Whether her repugnance at the idea was furthered by seeing Pitt in one of his "bored" moods, we do not know. Indeed it is uncertain whether they ever met. If we judge from the sketch of Pitt written by Wilberforce in 1801, he was mooted in the frigid bargaining manner usual with the French parents. Horace Walpole, a close friend of M. Neckers, showed the letter to Lord Camden, who thereupon passed it on to Pitt. Pitt and Neckers had so much respect for him that, if he refused in the name of their daughter, he would not be refused—by the French. What would have happened when Mlle. Necker was asked must be left to the imagination.<sup>2</sup>

From the charms of the French Court and the intrigues of the matrimonial schemes Pitt was suddenly called away. A messenger bade him return at once to London. Vain hopes all along hoped now came to pass. The King's desire was to have Ministers had overcome all other feelings, and he now turned to Pitt to free him from the toils of the Coalition. Pitt spent twenty-four hours in a carriage, then suffered the miseries of a Channel passage, and reached London on the 10th of October.

all her evils. "What! (exclaimed) throw off our Parliament and perhaps, was the almost complete political situation. The same rat noted that no one, except interest was in, or out of, office. His wo

Our levity is unlike that' of the jest, an epigram, or a ballad. We remember nothing for a moment. . . . Can the people be much attached to none? Can they hate any man? In my own opinion we have no passions are not so bad as most great nations no excessive vices, no raging animosities

The passage is interesting in dubbed us fickle and alleged our Addison in one of his essays perfectly natural early in the eighteenth century. Walpole's criticism is remarkable during what he termed a time of the two leading nations, as it was the gasso Sea of politics after one suspected the approach of a far in London nor Paris had any in front. Pitt had not fully emerged his briefs at Arras; the Corsican of all peoples, still studied under Horace Walpole could therefore of politics, the ruthless handling

state here that the East India Company was in a deplorable condition, mainly owing to the war with Hyder Ali and the subordination and rapacity of the Company's servants, which led to abuses degrading to Britain and oppressive to the natives of India. According to the terms of North's Regulating Act of 1773, Parliament had the right of intervention in all matters of high policy; but in one important question the Company set its behests at naught. In April 1782 a vote of censure was passed on the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, and the Company was requested to recall him. The Court of Directors issued an order to this effect; but the Court of Proprietors reversed their decision, and Hastings was left in a position ambiguous and irritating to all parties. Consequently dictatorial policy and the interests of the nation compelled Parliament to assert its paramount authority.

But the manner of the intervention and the act itself were alike extraordinary. The new India Bill was the joint work of Fox and Burke with some aid from the law-officers of the Crown. It has often been said, on the scantiest of evidence, to have been framed mainly by Burke; but the clauses which abrogate the Charter of the East India Company and vested the control of Indian affairs chiefly in Parliament, bear the imprint of the statesman of Fox rather than of the more cautious and conservative statesman.<sup>1</sup> In strict propriety the measure ought to have originated with Lord North. He privately expressed his approval of it, then, alleging indisposition, stayed away from Parliament the day of its introduction.<sup>2</sup>

Fox opened his case in a speech of great power. He dwelt on the ills resulting from the disorders in the Company's service, and in particular from the ambition of Warren Hastings.



creditors in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Their printed report laid stress on the heavy charge involved "which the wisdom of the nation has in other parts of the world." It also stated that £260,687, the charge incurred by the Government for the maintenance of French prisoners in the Seven Years' War, was a further stated that, if Government were to suppress extensive smuggling in tea (an article of great value of the monopolies of the Company), the amount would be sold by legitimate means. It should be borne in mind, as the Company's case was a conviction that the attack of Fox was

In the rest of his speech Fox detailed the need for making drastic changes in India, and for separating administrative affairs from commercial. Many authorities claimed that the tea trade belonged in reality to the Crown; others held that on one point all must agree, that the Crown should have with "a remote and difficult trade." Fox proposed to form "a mixed system of government" to meet the complexion of our interests in India." He proposed to establish a Board of seven members appointed by Parliament, for three or five years, the term finally suggested—having full powers to dismiss officers in India, and complete control of the Government. The Board was to sit in London, and report to Parliament," and the minutes of its meetings were to be under inspection by Parliament. If this scheme was proposed that in future the King should appoint a

ance of presents by the Company's servants in India, a source of corruption and oppression—would be strictly correct. Fox admitted that the private influence of the Crown, at its worst days, was nothing compared with that of the India Company, and wisely abstained for the present from naming the seven commissioners whom he proposed.

Here was the weak point of an otherwise excellent measure, and Pitt, towards whom all eyes were directed, fastened on it. While admitting the urgent need of reform, he deplored the abrogation of all the charters and privileges of an ancient company under the plea of necessity. "Is not necessity the pretence of every usurpation? Necessity is the creed of tyrants: it is the creed of slaves." Further, what would be the result if that formidable political weapon, the patronage of the India Company, were transferred to the Ministers then in office, or finally to the Crown? On the one side it would lead to the grossest corruption, on the other, to despotism.<sup>2</sup>

Pitt, it will be seen, opposed the measure owing to the inevitable consequences which it would entail in the present state of affairs then existing in Parliament, where a Coalition held together only with the aim of securing the spoils of office and even richer booty in the future.<sup>3</sup> The dissolution of the enormous patronage of the India Company, the opening up of golden vistas that fired the imaginations even of the squirearchy who trooped after Lord North. As for the followers of Fox, they were jubilant at prospects which were not only clear in the East, but a long way

Fletcher, and Robert Gregory. In Lord North's family were his son, Colonel North, Viscount North, and Lord Elliot.

The appointment of seven pronouncers, and the assumption of almost unbounded responsibility were not the only defects of the Bill. The Bill itself contained many excellent provisions for the separation of governing power from the Crown, in conjunction with the Crown, on terms which were not, in the latter, was a bold step; but much of the Bill certainly overshot the limits of fair criticism. If Fox and North had chosen the seven pronouncers from among all three parties, the measure might have been stopped. Now, however, the measure justified the most vehement criticism. A great deal of ink was poured on the Bill. Two caricatures of the Bill had very wide circulation, probably at the expense of the East India Company. One represented Fox as standing in the ruins of the East India House; the second represented Fox as Pitt's man and received a small part of the East India House. Fox as Carlo Khan riding into Delhi on the face of Lord North, and preceded by Burke.

Pitt wrote privately to the Governor-General, saying that its prestige would be enhanced if the creditors could be arranged and a declaration made that they would allow ample time for the payment of claims.<sup>1</sup> But caricatures, suggestions, and attacks were less. The same facts which discredited the Bill whetted the eagerness of the ministerial party. At the second reading Pitt briskly renewed his attack. He now had the support of William Grenville, whose speech, which lacked "the commanding simplicity of all the captivating rotundity and splendour of Burke, but equalled it in argumentative power," was supported by Scott (the future Lord Eldon), reinforced by all was in vain. Burke, in a majestic and powerful speech, the Bill would save India from manifold evils, and with righteous indignation." But material

1783]

## THE COALITION

plex and far-reaching measure through the Commons by a majority of 208 votes to 102 (3rd December).

This was a heavy blow to the Opposition, especially to Pitt who had said that he would fight the whole Bill, clause by clause. Horace Walpole wrote two days later that Pitt had slunk out of the contest, but that the check would do him good, and that he had been by his premature fame. Walpole also remarked that while excelling Chatham in logical power, the son had more firmness and perseverance. Readers of those charming letters will note with some amusement that in the middle of December, Walpole wrote that nothing but obstinacy prevented Pitt resigning his post as Prime Minister. After that he gave up the rôle of political prophet.

For now there occurred a series of events which taught the Opposition to wiseacres. The King intervened in a surprising manner. The influence from above was suddenly turned against the interests of the nether world. George III had been awaiting a fit opportunity for tripping up the hated Ministers. A few weeks before, he had covered Fox and North with rebuffs in front of the whole Court. Acting on the first rumour of the death of Sir Eyre Coote in India, they had proffered a petition that his ribbon of the Order of the Bath should go to the widow and believed that they had secured the granted assent of the Sovereign. The aspirant therefore appeared at the next day at St. James's Palace with the officers of the Order; but the King, affecting great surprise at the unseemly haste of the ministers in acting on unofficial information, refused to give the ribbon, repulsed their entreaties, and postponed the ceremony.

George was now to taste the sweets of revenge in a more than ceremonial manner. His coadjutor was Earl Temple,

—and this is an interesting point in our connection with the exercise of the royal veto on the Bill. The exercise of the veto by both Houses, would be a "violent" step.<sup>1</sup> The King acted secretly and indirectly through the Lords.

In order to exert pressure in the most delicate position, a card was written (probably in the King's hand) to Earl Temple. His Majesty allowed Earl Temple to say that the India Bill was not only not his friend but was even considered by him as an enemy; and if these were the facts, enough, Earl Temple might use whatever influence he was stronger and more to the purpose."<sup>2</sup> After this, Earl Temple set to work to whittle down the Bill. His success was startling and complete. The value of the spoils of the Indies paled under the shadow of the royal displeasure. The fear of losing all chance of power at home, whether titular or material, sent the Opposition trimmers trooping over to the Opposition. The success of which seemed assured, was thrown into doubt by a majority of nineteen. On the 17th December, the King ordered Lord North and Fox to send in their resignation. Their Under-Secretaries, "as a personal intimation would be disagreeable to him." He then turned at once to Temple, who on the day following was ordered to dismiss the other Ministers from office. On the 19th December, the King sent for Pitt and Fox, and Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Thus it was that Pitt became Prime Minister in his twenty-fifth year. His acceptance of the royal veto, use of the royal prerogative is an action that has been defended. There can be no doubt that George III. acted by seeking in an underhand way to influence the House of Peers. The assertion of Earl Stanhope that the veto involve the infraction of any specific rule of procedure will not pass muster. As was ably pointed out by Pitt in the Commons on 17th December, the

so too the intervention of the Crown during the debate was undoubtedly an infraction of the liberties of Parliament, not forbidden by any specific rule of the constitution, but which contravenes the spirit of the ninth clause of the Bill of Rights, which stipulates for complete freedom of debate in Parliament.

The attitude of Pitt towards this question during the debate of 17th December in the Commons is noteworthy. When he attempted to defend such a use of the royal prerogative, he was then first reported: he asserted, no doubt with perfect truth, that the report was an idle rumour, of which the House should take no cognizance. The House did not share his opinion. Swayed by a vehement speech of Fox, who declared that the "infernal spirit of intrigue" ever present in the royal counsels, and charged Pitt with an underhand attempt to subvert power, members decided by a majority of nearly two-thirds that to report the opinion, or pretended opinion, of the Crown on any Bill under discussion in Parliament, was a high misdemeanour, subversive of the constitution.<sup>1</sup>

It was in face of these resolutions that Pitt, on 19th January 1793, took office. If he looked solely to Parliament, his position was hopeless. Confronting him was a hostile majority in the House under a great disappointment, and threatening him with more his relative, Earl Temple, with the penalties of the Bill of Attainder. On hearing the news of his acceptance of office, members of the Coalition burst into loud laughter, and then trooped over to the Opposition benches. Scarcely a day later they conceal their mirth during the ensuing debates; and on 22nd December the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider the state of the nation. Certainly Pitt's position was not so good enough; for his triumph seemed to be the result of a coalition of intrigue, unworthy of the son of Chatham, and far from the influence of Parliament. He figured as the King's Minister, not to office by the votes of nineteen Peers, against the Opposition in the Commons. One can therefore understand the persistent Whig tradition, in which his action appeared the greatest violation of the liberties of Parliament.

Parliament are subservient to the will of the majority of the House, when the majority of the House is strongly reprobated by public opinion, an immediate eclipse. In a not dissimilar appeal from a discredited House, his son was justified in taking a step to the people's will at the first opportunity. He always looked on the Coalition as a compromise which the forms of the constitution demanded in its spirit. He knew that the coalition termed "that scandalous alliance" the Coalition seemed more than ever pointed solely to their own ruin. This very fact damned the India Bill which cared not a jot for parliament, together by hopes of booty. Men against George III now began to pronounce even his last device just. Ministers who were about to perpetrate the century. In looking away from parliament to the will of the nation, he followed the footsteps of his father, who had made an appeal, and never in vain.

Finally we must remember that the "King's Friend." He had come down to the conditions which George King knew full well that he had to meet. He had to meet an independent nature. He had to meet a summer, when conditions favoured

The importance of the events of 17th-22nd Dec can scarcely be overrated. In a personal sense they had an incalculable influence on the fortunes of George III, Burke, and many lesser men. In constitutional history, afterwards appear, they brought about the development of the Cabinet and the reconstruction of the two chief political parties in their modern forms. The happy ending of the crisis saved the ship of State to reach smoother waters and made her, though many of her crew and all foreign beholders regarded her as wellnigh a castaway. All this, and more, did Pitt's action in those days. He knew the serious nature of the emergency; and at such a time it behoves the one man to take the helm, regardless of all cries as to his youth or his forwardness. Pitt had the proud confidence of Charles James Fox, he and he alone could save the kingdom, and the whole of mankind has applauded the resolve of the father in 1756, and the determination of his youthful son in 1783. Conduct, which in a pliable man would have been a crime, is one of the greatest achievements to fame of William Pitt the Younger.



## CHAPTER THE STRUGGLE

With tears as sovereign  
That thou, my brother, n  
In top of all design, my  
Friend and companion in  
The arm of mine own bo  
Where mine his thought  
Unreconcilable, should  
Our equalness to this.

SH

THE first difficulty which  
Minister was of a person  
December, his cousin, Earl T  
forthwith retired to his domain  
This event seemed to presage t  
tration, which the action of the  
to being. So assured was F  
Temple's resignation to coward  
because the inevitable fall of  
plained away by the action of t  
severe blow to Pitt. Bishop T

owing to the loss of his letters in these important we know from the Buckingham Papers that he was with political life and had claimed the award of some sign of the King's approval of his services in Ireland, an abrupt dismissal by Fox and North. The proud nobleman doubtless entered into the plan for the those enemies, in the hope of benefiting the State the crown on his own career. Rumour had already him the Dukedom of Buckingham, and in this case jade truthfully voiced his desires.<sup>1</sup>

The prominent part which he had played in the doubtless led him to insist on some high honour, the nature of the claim and its reception by Pitt we know for he loyally maintained silence as to the cause of it, but the Earl's letter of 29th December to Pitt breathed resentment in every line. It is the peevish outpouring of an appointed man, who saw his *protégés* in Ireland not his own wishes slighted.<sup>2</sup>

The question arises—why did not Pitt press the cousin? His services in Ireland had been valuable, the Prime Minister very largely owed his present position, the answer would seem to be that Pitt soon found out, as to his objectionable use of the King's name, and he rejected the rumour to that effect, and it is consistent with his character to suppose that, after probing the matter to the bottom, he declined to press on the King. Earl Temple's rupture was sharp and sudden. It is even possible that the quarrel passed between them. In any case, it is certain that he did not raise the question of a reward for the Earl's services in Ireland.

archives, contains the official notification of honours.

MY DEAR LORD,

Your Lordship will receive from Lord [unclear] of His Majesty's having given orders for your Lordship the rank of Marquis. In addition to His Majesty's favour, I have great satisfaction in your Lordship that, if His Majesty should determine, of not giving the rank of Duke, it is His gracious intention to include your motion. I need not add how happy I am in this occasion, nor how truly I am at all times

My dear Lord

Your most affectionate

Turning from this personal matter, we find a time between the Pitt and Grenville difficulties confronting the young Premier daunted an experienced statesman. "I was with amusement at his efforts.—"Well, he likes during the holidays; but it will be in administration, depend upon it." So says Mrs. Crewe, to Wilberforce on 21st. He voiced the general opinion. Yet Pitt the next day Wilberforce noted in his journal "Evening [at] Pitt's. Cabinet formed." "The young chief show any anxiety." "I asked, "if they stop the supplies?" "The young nobleman (afterwards Earl St. Vincent) replied his brother-in-law, Lord Mahon, they will not venture to do."<sup>1</sup> The young nobleman (afterwards Earl St. Vincent) correct; but Pitt had rightly foreseen the path. For the present, on the receipt of the King that no dissolution or prorogation

## 1783] THE STRUGGLE WITH FOX

he found it desirable to pursue towards the Earl of Shelburne long the official leader of the Chathamites. He did not invite him in his Ministry, partly, perhaps, from a feeling of delicacy at asking his former chief to serve under him, but mainly from a conviction that his unpopularity would needlessly burden the labouring ship of State. To Orde he expressed his deep obligations to the Earl, but lamented his inability to leave out of account "the absolute influence of prejudice" against him. He did not even consult Shelburne as to the choice of coadjutors; and the Earl let it be known that he would have no connection with new men, "lest he should injure them."<sup>1</sup> Pitt also sustained several direct rebuffs. Though, on 19th December, he sent an obsequious request to the Duke of Grafton to strengthen his hands by accepting the Privy Seal, that nobleman declined; Camden was equally coy; and, strangest of all, his own brother-in-law, Mahon, would not come forward. We can detect a certain amount of anxiety in the following letter of Pitt to Lord Sackville, formerly Germain, which I have discovered in the Pitt Papers (No. 102):

*Dec. 29, 1783*

MY LORD,

In the arduous situation in which His Majesty has condescended to command my services at this important juncture, I am necessarily anxious to obtain the honor of a support and assistance so important to your Lordship's. I flatter myself Mr. Herbert will have had the goodness to express my sense of the honor your Lordship did me by your obliging expressions towards me. Permit me to add how much mortified I received in being disappointed of his assistance at the Board of Admiralty, which I took the liberty of proposing to him, in consequence of the conversation Lord Temple had had with your Lordship. I shall

From Wraxall's *Memoirs*<sup>1</sup> we learn that Pitt took to pave the way for the receipt of the money in vain. Lord Sackville refused to promise a general support.

The most serious refusal was that of Ireland by Earl Cornwallis. George Pitt's proposal of that nobleman, who would have proved of infinite service to the country. Who knows whether the rebellion in Ireland might not have been averted by the presence of Pitt at Dublin Castle in the eighties? An administrative duty in the Empire was not a young nobleman, the Duke of Rutland, whose actions seem to have been his show of hospitality, and his early patronage of Pitt.

The Cabinet as finally formed consisted of the following members: Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury; Lord the Exchequer; the Marquis of Camden (later Marquis of Leeds), an amiable but unenterprising statesman; Lord Sydney (T. Townshend), Secretary of Affairs; Lord Sydney (T. Townshend), Secretary of Affairs; Earl Gower, President of the Council; Lord Camden, when Earl Camden succeeded him; Lord Privy Seal (up to November 1793); Lord Howe, the Duke taking the Vice-Chancellor; Lord Howe, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Chancellor. In debating power this Cabinet was far from Pitt and Thurlow, not one of them made a tolerable speech, or possessed the sense to make up for oratorical deficiencies.

Thurlow might have been a tower

the Norman Conquest in his eyebrow and the Feudal every feature of his face. Add to these formidably sonorous voice, his powers of crushing retort, above all connection with George III, and his influence in the House can be imagined. Yet his reputation rested on a basis; his knowledge of law was narrow, his culture shallow, his private character contemptible. He was known to his mistress and his illegitimate daughters, just as he brow beat Tories and Whigs.<sup>1</sup> On the whole his reputation is hard to save on the ground that the majority of mankind is imposed on by externals, and is too uncritical or too shallow to sound the depths of character.

For the present Pitt tolerated Thurlow just as the captain of an untried warship might tolerate the presence of a long-barrelled ing gun of uncertain power, in the midst of light weapons. The boom of his voice was worth something to a Ministry. The posts not of Cabinet rank were filled as follows: the Duke of Richmond, Master-General of the Ordnance; <sup>2</sup> Kenyon, Attorney-General; Pepper Arden, Solicitor-General; William Grenville (afterwards Lord Grenville) and Lord Mulgrave, Paymasters of the Forces; Henry Dundas (afterwards Melville), Treasurer of the Navy; Sir George Yonge, Secretary at War; George Rose and Richard Steele, Secretaries of the Treasury; Thomas Orde, Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Of these the Duke of Richmond had great influence, but was personally unpopular. Grenville and Mulgrave were useful, hard-working men, but uninteresting in person and in speech. Their characters and that of Dundas will come in Chapter XII. Here we may note that the bold and jovial Dundas made him popular as a man; but his deep

however, the distrust with which the "Caledonian" regarded him to be no more than a subordinate; and the ingenious poetaster, who maliciously aimed these lines at his weak consistency:

His ready tongue with sophistries  
Can say, unsay, and be consistent  
This day can censure, and the next  
In speech extol, and stigmatize in a

The other subordinates claim only the blame. George Yonge was a nonentity, under whom the Government sank to the nadir of efficiency. Kenyon and Lloyd were very young men; the latter was one of Pitt's most lively and amiable, but having little influence in the House could not take Pepper seriously. The Ministry aroused little confidence among the Opposition, and derision among opponents. The general opinion was by Sir Gilbert Elliot (first Earl of Minto) that the Ministers were "a set of children playing at Ministers, and will be back to school, and in a few days all will be as of yore, on the former course."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand Daniel O'Connell, to the Duke of Rutland, said that people applauded the Government and were glad that Pitt, in showing a regard for the interests of the people, proved himself to be not "too virtuous for a Minister."<sup>2</sup>

Such were the predictions concerning a Minister who was to last nearly eighteen years. In one respect the predictions of his colleagues made Pitt's task easier. His temper would never have brooked the superiority of Fox, Temple and Shelburne. From the outset he

to strengthen a constitutionally weak administration part of this, George III created four new peerages, for one of the title of Viscountess, Edward Blount, who by then was law became Lord Blount, Henry created Lord Castlet, and a baronet was created and one of the Lords of Northumberland. Thus, of nobility, which had remained hereditarily sealed previous administrations, were now opened with a certain freedom.

Consequently, which of it is more pleasing to relate, soon after, on the 15th January the Lordship of the Hills, which was a year for life, fell vacant by the death of William, a younger son of the Whig statesman, a peer himself, it would have been not only justifiable, a title to take this post. Despite the advice of his good friends, Pitt refused to increase his very slender sum at the public expense, and remained on a Colonel kept the new one in place of the previous one, a peer, which he had been in the command of Birmingham and spoke in a loud, which was a very good the public account. That person, which he was granted by House for all who were a moderate majority. There had a will, as something either for a kind of a cause of House. The talent has been collected in later times, no other talent to the others Bathurst's self-allegation as of official persecution. Nothing better illustrates which has changed the footsteps of the men than that Pitt for his reward for an action similar in all respects. It has elicited praise for his father. Both of them, and at the subject to encourage those reader to put





Company manifested a desire to meet him more than and that their representatives should confer with him in January 1784. Indeed Sir H. was in large measure the author of resolutions which had already been framed at that time and which gained the assent of the majority of the directors of the Company. He took with him to the General Court of the Company the following resolutions which were to the effect:—That the Company, in the justice of the Government to the relief of some of its pressing claims, consented that the following gentlemen should in the summer of 1784 negotiate for a loan from India manifested to some of the King's Ministers, and that they must conform to the King's measures. The Council to be seated in the Minister and other responsible delegates to attend to the affairs of the Company, matters relating to commercial affairs must likewise be referred to the Minister who may negotiate them if they bear military consequences, and in the reference of the Company's dispute, the decision of His Majesty's Council shall be final. The General Court of the Company shall be empowered to send any and all of its agents to His Majesty's other pleasure shall have the right to be the same. 4. A dividend on India to be carried out in the name of the Government and three parts of four each of the French Government and the Government of the East India Company shall be carried out in the name of the Government, being appointed and received by the Company's appointed the latter subject to His Majesty's approbation. They could either by the Government or by the Company.

When the Company agreed to surrender so much of the battle was half won, but, for the present, the struggle was not over. The Company's representatives

inconveniences. He then stated the principles of his proposals. Firstly, the Indian dominions were to be in the hands of the Company of merchants in England. Nevertheless, any change should be made in the management to the concurrence of that Company, its commerce was to be left as far as possible to its supervision, while questions mixed up with questions of policy and revenue were involved, obviously Government action was required.

Having laid down these guiding principles, Pitt proceeded to fill in details. He claimed that his proposals would not interfere arbitrarily with the privileges of the Company, but that his new Board of Control would be an independent organ of a party, but an adjunct of the government. It was to consist of at least two of the Ministers of the Crown, namely, the Secretary for Home Affairs and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, along with a certain number of Privy Counsellors named by the King. These last were to be paid salaries, but their expenses were not to be paid. All the despatches of the Company, whether those of a completely commercial nature, or those of a political nature, to the new India Board and countersigned by the Board, controlling the patronage of the Company, the Board would have the right to negative their chief appointments. The four Presidencies were henceforth to be administered by a Governor (a Governor-General in the case of Bengal), a Commander-in-Chief, and a Council. The Crown would have three Commanders-in-Chief, and would have the right of appointing the Governors and their councillors—a measure designed to prevent such a fiasco as that of the attempt to reform the East India Company at Hastings. Finally, in order to curb the abuses of the military service, Pitt proposed to institute at Westminster a court for the trial of offences committed in India, and that parts of the second India Bill of Fox might be adopted for the prevention of abuses in India.

There can be no doubt that this measure

But the House, too, was determined to gain the execution of the act. It was moved rather by the vehement criticism of 25,000 signatures at the H. gate for Fox's influence in the election and that it cannot be must inevitably lead to the "corruption" of the House. North's action still catered solely for Fox's sake and in this January the measure was thrown out of the House, leaving the House door closed.

Serious and great excitement ensued. Fox and his followers loudly called on the Ministry to resign. Pitt sat still, much saying nothing to the clamour, except when General Conway accused him of being agents over the land to corrupt the voters. Then he started up, his feet striking a chair to substantiate the charge that he was the first declaring his indifference to the clamour of the people, and his determination to work for the welfare of the state.

Three days after he had charged him with acting as the unaccountable Minister of the House and obstructing the government he moved to report that such was not his act and intention. He moved it and carried because the question was impossible to be raised after the report of the House would have brought the House to a standstill. He believed that not the smallest part of the House would follow him to the recent amendment of the House of the Commons. The argument was telling for the House was made but dissolved from one hundred and one to one hundred and thirty, more on 25th January, and now to eight. Three days passed her conviction that the feeling of the House was relating to the far-reaching effect which the country had begun to desire. A second obstacle like Willsall came to me that Pitt was vindicating the constitution when he moved the amendment of 25th.

down at 54 and national ruin seemed imminent. Fox desired to gain time in order to watch the opinion, and to appear as a peace-restoring Neptune, not an inconsiderate Aeolus.

An influential minority of the House longed for that very day fifty-three of its members met at the St. Albans Tavern to urge a union of parties on a more and less unpopular basis than the Fox-Norfolk Union. Pointing a committee of five, they besought Fox to use his influence to bring about a coalition between Fox and Pitt. As we have seen, the hostility between them had arisen, not from difference of principle, but from divergent interests of party groups. It had been kindled by Pitt's acceptance of office in 1783, and was especially odious to Fox; and the Whig speech of 26th January, pointedly declared that the urgent need of union and conciliation, he considered the vindication of the honour of the House by the overthrow of the present unconstitutional Ministry. A similar motion was sent on the same day by the Duke of Portland to the meeting of the St. Albans Tavern.

Such a beginning was far from promising. The standing existed between the nominal and real parties was not a party with a view to forcing on a dissolution of the Ministry, but that the conciliators were appealing to party arbiters, and that they at once passed judgement on the Ministry. Matters were not improved during the debate in the House on the need of forming an extended Administration (February). Fox, while disclaiming any personal animosity, insisted on the resignation of Ministers as the condition for the formation of a wider Administration. On 10th February more declared that any union between them would be an honourable way, and that it would be a disgrace to resign merely in order to treat for re-admission. The original motion having passed unanimously, a second was then brought forward substantiating the first. Whereupon Pitt, nettled by these insidious



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methods of partisanship prevalent in those a final appeal from the committee, Pitt and the King to make one more effort to bring to an accommodation. The reply of the King shows that, in spite of his strong objections but with the stipulation that the Duke should have anything above an equal share to others in the nation, not to be the head of it, whatever he should hold." Pitt amplified this statement by declaring that the Ministry would be formed "on a wide basis of equal terms." Obviously this implied the Duke of Portland and Fox on equal terms with the Duke, while approving the word "fair," revealing the meaning of the word "equal"; and when the Duke could be best explained in their interview, it came unless the meaning of the word was changed. This straining at gnats put an end to the negotiations. It is abundantly clear that Pitt went as far as could be expected that the continuation of the deadlock resulted in the loss of the Duke of Portland.

Ten years were to elapse before the Portfolians were to strengthen Pitt's hands, and their accession to the French Revolution involved the break-up of the party. In February 1784 there was a chance that the party would form a working alliance with the Whigs. Such a union would have formed a powerful party to renovate the life of Great Britain and to withstand the strain of the coming crises. It was no union could be lasting where the party insisted on dictating its terms and gaining a citadel.

There is, indeed, an air of unreality about the whole probably due to the fact that each party was out of public opinion and the chances of a decisive victory. The fact probably explains the action of Fox who after time he carried motions of censure against the wavering majorities. He and his followers

the heads of Ministers. When the Lords by a large majority reprobated the actions of the Commons and begged Pitt to continue his Ministers in office, the intervention of the House was strongly resented by the Coalition majority.

Yet Fox never proved his attacks home. The three great speeches remained mere stage thunder, probably but not certainly doubting his power to launch the bolt. There was, in fact, truth in Pitt's description of him as "the champion of the majority of this House against the land and the people." Hatred of the unnatural Coalition, far from being diminished, was intensified by Pitt's manly and consistent conduct. The popular imagination thrilled at the sight of the young hero braving the clamour of Foxites and Northites in reliance on the final verdict of the nation. According to all the contemporary text books, the Whig leader spoke sound doctrine and claimed against Pitt's tenure of office in the teeth of the censures of the House, but men discerned the weakness of the Opposition, they weighed it rather than counted heads, and the balance of common sense the Fox-North majority put on the beam. Westminster and Banbury, the very places which returned Fox and North, now sent up addresses of thanks to the King for dismissing them from office. Middlesex, Kent, York, Worcester, Exeter, and Southwark, besides many other places, sent in addresses to the same effect, thereby cases dishonouring the parliamentary drafts of their constituents. The City of London, the home of blatant Whiggism, and of the Wilkes affair, now thanked Pitt for his services to the country, and him its freedom, with the accompaniment of a gold snuff-box and a gold ride into the city on 28th February to receive the



difficulty parried the blows aimed at his moments they were in serious danger, but sans, they succeeded in escaping to White's was loudly accused of being the author of course, it would be foolish to lay this brutality. It seems probable, however, that hangers-on some scoundrels to incapacitate Pitt for elementary strifes. He, and he alone, could meet the storm; and his removal even for a week the triumph of Fox and North. We may not resign his membership of Brooks's Club an outrage—a proof that he was far above all or rancour.

The prospects of the Opposition were by the events of 28th February. Everything the actions of that ill-assorted couple, North on 1st March they carried by twelve votes King for the removal of Ministers; but not only with firmness but with dignity had before replied to a similar address, the failure of the efforts to form an extended *fair and equal terms*, but saw in that failure missing Ministers who appeared to have the country, and against whom no specific These skilful retorts struck home; and a full representation to the King, said to have Burke, was carried by a majority of only one as tantamount to a triumph; for two days Duke of Rutland that he was "tired to death for I think our present state is entitled

weakness of the Coalition now became daily more evident. The contents that were hidden during the months of seeming tension broke forth as the prospect of defeat loomed large ahead. The tension of the past two months now gave way to a strangeness, resulting doubtless from the uncertainties of the situation. Fox relapsed into silence. Pitt rarely spoke and scarcely answered a reply to the smaller men who kept up the aimless chatter. In truth, the heavy-laden air at St. Stephen's gave premonitory signs of that portent in nature when songsters become morose and animals creep about with anxious restlessness under the shadow of an oncoming eclipse.

The nation was now to give its verdict. On 24th March the King dissolved Parliament. The Great Seal disappeared from the house of the Lord Chancellor on that very morning; and after great efforts another was ready by noon of the 25th. For several weeks the land had simmered with suspense. "Evening Post" wrote Horace Walpole on 12th March, "talk of nothing but politics." In truth, a time of new political fashions was at hand. The old having been discarded, very much depended on the decided lead given by some of the leading constituencies.

For various reasons men looked eagerly to the example of Yorkshire and Westminster. Both had recently taken a new way in the agitation for Economic and Parliamentary Reform and were strongholds of Whiggism; yet both the country and the city had recently acclaimed the conduct of Pitt. John Kebleton Mason, a well-known poet of those days, who, with the reformer, John Jay, had fathered the Yorkshire Reform Association, was now working hard on behalf of George III and Pitt.

and-six. In good old English style the two set forth on the hustings in fair and open debate, with speakers of both parties. The large town evidently favoured the royal prerogative against the claims of the Whigs and of North's policy championed by the great lords and their tenants. Constitutional precedents, and all who were for a change of Ministry. The issues at stake were clear. The cleavage between parties was zigzag, the result of the part fell ineffectively. What with the sleight of hand of the parties the meeting seemed about to break up. There appeared on the dais a figure so slight and so slender before the blasts. But the first few sentences he uttered penetrated the storm and dominated the assembly. It was the voice of Wilberforce, who once more showed the clearness of thought and beauty of utterance in a great throng. Boswell, describing the whole in a letter, says: "I saw what seemed a mere shrimp at first, but, as I listened he grew and grew until he seemed a whale."

The victory of mind over matter was the result of the movement of the Coalition and defence of Pitt by Wilberforce with him; and a great shout arose: "We are all for you, county member." The instinct of the masses was the tact of Wilberforce in uniting all Whigs who were not committed to the Coalition or bound by other considerations. He furthered his cause; so that finally an election was held. It was always been decided by the three great parties. The result resulted in the triumphant return of Wilberforce. The day of his death was a grand day.

tragi-comic solemnity.<sup>1</sup> The strength and universality of popular impulse surprised even Pitt.<sup>2</sup> He was carried triumphantly by 334 votes for the University of Cambridge, Lord Euston, gaining 288, while their opponents, Bland and Mansfield, polled only 267 and 181 respectively. Wilkes swept Middlesex by a large majority—for the Skilful speakers like Erskine, county magnates like Earl and Thomas Grenville, were thrust aside for the crime of supporting the Coalition; and in certain boroughs, where no members had been sent down to oppose that hated union, travellers claimed against it were forcibly detained and returned members of Parliament. Never, we are assured by Wraxall, was less bribery used in the interests of the Crown; for, as he asserts, "corruption for once became almost unnecessary."

The reasons of this extraordinary overthrow of the Coalition are not far to seek. Tories felt far more regard for the royal prerogative than for Lord North, now that he had gone over to the King's enemies; and independent Whigs refused to follow Fox in his ex-centric march towards the Northites. The Coalition was in reality defeated by—the Coalition. The dined old Whig, Horace Walpole, might abjure his former alliance with Mason for heading "the pert and ignorant cabal against the royal prerogative," or he might declare that the nation must be intoxicated to the use of the royal prerogative against "the Palladium of the people" (the House of Commons). "Junius" might raise his dreaded voice to assure his countrymen that the victory would put an end to their boasted liberties. It was useful

<sup>1</sup> "Fox's Martyrs: a new Book of the Sufferings of the Faithful."

nation's instinct bade it break with the path that promised steady progress. The aside the old party lines and organizations had been seen since the advent of the Georges.

Only at one place was the rout of the Vindictive doubtful issue of the conflict at Westminster. The prodigious personal powers of Fox. A union of strength and eloquence with frankness, which appeared in him in all its potency. The "man" (a phrase about his rival) waved his wand with a few days of platform speaking sufficed to win popularity. Despite the utmost efforts of the Government on behalf of their candidates, Admiral Wray, the Whig totals crept up day by day. The seat of the latter, which at one time seemed to have followed the course of the Westminster election, interest that reveals his hatred of the Whigs. In his suggestion on 13th April to Pitt that the fabricated at Westminster to counterbalance the have been trumped up for Fox; or again the *Quackers* [sic] might perhaps be induced to serve the interests of the Government.

All was of no avail. The arts of Windsor and the charms of Devonshire House. Georgiana, the Whig, used her allurements to rally voters to the Government. It was said to have carried her complaisance so far as to make a promise of his vote. Certain it is that

tempered by age and discretion. Thanks to the ex-Georgiana, and to the influence of the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire, Fox, at the exciting contest of forty days, headed Sir Cecil Wray for 460 votes, though he still fell 460 votes below Lord Hood. The Prince of Wales celebrated this triumph by a great reception on the grounds of Carlton House at the very time when the King was passing outside to open Parliament.

But the local success of the Whigs was not yet decisive. Many suspicious facts during the election seemed to point to the result; and when Sir Cecil Wray demanded a return from the High Bailiff of Westminster not only granted the return, but refused to make any return for Westminster, thus invalidating the election of Fox and even of Hood until an inquiry was held.<sup>1</sup> Fox entered Parliament, but it was through the shrewdness and foresight of Sir Thomas Dundas, who had presented himself for election for the Orkney and Shetland Islands. At once he attacked the High Bailiff as well as the Government, and was accused of influencing the action of that official. The matter was too involved and technical to enter upon here. Its chief interest lies in the manly and massive oration which Fox flung at Pitt on 8th June. The Prime Minister evaded the matter with much dexterity; and a large majority insisted on the inquiry. After nine months of inquiry the position of the Government was virtually unchanged. The Government's followers desired to end this expensive and fruitless inquiry, but they opposed the motions to this effect, and early in the year 1785 found himself abandoned by his majority.

The motives which prompted his action on this affair are not considered in Chapter XII; but we may here note that

by Dundas, Lord Mulgrave, and Bearcroft, this cursed business. . . . The consequence if Pitt will *now* recede and agree to order many will form a very different idea of such an odious business is forced down. Fortunately Pitt's own friends abandoned went too far. The affair unsteadied his followers, the impression was spread abroad that he was not fit for winning a decisive victory, but not to add lustre to its laurels. Apart from this, the influence of the Coalition on public opinion more than far outweighed the triumph in and after 1784 was so complete in the era in British politics. We may therefore judge of its causes and its significance.

Besides the irremediable blunder committed in forming the Coalition with Lord North, he was during the early weeks of 1784. It was unwise to stake everything on the cohesion of the Commons, and to seek to avert a disaster by his motions in the House, it was the worst advice to advise the King to appeal to the nation. It was a natural and almost inevitable step, seeing that he had sat for four years, and the opponents were numerous. Yet, while hindering the course of public opinion, the postponement of votes for the public service was acting with a single eye to the public vantage

Pitt, on the other hand, showed great tactical skill in his way out from an apparently hopeless position. That his tenure of office was irregular, he justified by an answerable retort that the Opposition could not go on making their decision, that supplies should be postponed. To prevent a dissolution, he made it clear whose was the responsibility for the resulting disorganization. Finally, when the opponents to block the Mutiny Bill had set free the legislative machine, he appealed to the country. Men were to see which side had best consulted the interests of the nation. Over against the impotently factious conduct of the Opposition, the patriotic good sense of his rival in disregarding the censures of a discredited House in order on the first opportunity to consult the will of the nation.

So soon as the essential facts of that unparalled struggle are fully grasped, the diatribes against Pitt for misapplying the use of the royal prerogative for selfish purposes are seen to be mere verbiage. Equally futile is it to inquire, why did Russell, why the constitution was not afterwards restored in favour of the Crown, and why the Court did not take advantage by its triumph in the General Election of 1801. The fact is that Pitt had never intended to govern as a despot or to subject the constitution to the royal will. It was that his pride revolted against any such degradation of principles, no less than the tough consistency of his nature bade it. Because he insisted on maintaining the King's prerogative at one point, namely, that Ministers were dismissed and not by the House of Commons, he was far from doing so at all points. Even in that particular, he admitted that a vote of no confidence could not be carried on by Ministers who



ward measures which the King disapproved. In such matters he had his way down to George III demurred on conscientious grounds. The cause of Parliamentary Reform resulted from the utter indifference of the King to the bargain that he had corruptly struck.

But if the memorable contest of 1782 is sometimes ascribed to it in part, it was a moment in regard to the monarchy, and not of events at St. Stephen's. George III, from his long struggle with the Whigs, the attitude of the peril had taught him prudence, and, while keeping a tight hand on the reins, forth content, in the more important matters, leave a free hand to the Minister who was in open conflict with the Commons which precipitate. The relations between the King and the House therefore came to resemble those of the first two Georges and Walpole.

Consequently, the growth in the power of the House had been interrupted since the fall of 1782. It proceeded normally. During the seventeenth century the principle became firmly established that the Crown was the centre of authority, and that authority nominally from the King, but in fact of a mandate from the people. George III, freed from the thralldom of the Coalition, became an authority which was at once complete. He no longer had to do with the Whigs and Tories, but with a man who had the confidence of the nation. The same fact tended to make the future more and more a homogeneous body, a Council, obeying the impulsion of the King, and force to his declarations of policy. This was seen in Lord North's decade of office, for he was guided and at the behests of the sovereign.

that those disputes were settled before the storms of the American Revolution beat upon that ancient fabric.

Finally, we may note that Pitt was far more than Walpole. The sturdy Norfolk squire wielded power, but only in the two Houses of the Whig Houses; but Pitt was established in a wider and grander mandate. The General Election of 1760 shattered the existing party system and shattered the rule of the few families who had hitherto dominated the Georgian age. The somnolent acquiescence of the populace in that long reign gave way to a more critical spirit, to a sense that the old parties must readjust themselves under a new leadership. The conception of a union which should absorb the best of both Whigs and Tories received a startlingly complete realization for the greatest of the results of the election of 1760 was the emergence of a party which may be termed national.

## CHAPTER

### RETRENCHMENT

In the arithmetic of the customs, two make sometimes only one.—DEAN SWIFT

WHEN the sixteenth Parliament met on 18th May 1784 the arrears of the national debt were as serious as a plague. Owing to fierce party strifes and to the want of remedial measures had been passed, the "Economic Reform" passed by Lord Rockingham was only an oasis in an otherwise arid waste of partisan warfare. The condition of the country was most serious; and a collapse could have been averted only by the most skill and care. The three parties were on a tale of waning confidence. Even the Whigs had declined, from an average of 65 per cent. at the close of that year. They were as weak as the Tories in 1784; and it is a striking tribute to the energy inspired that, on the results of the 1784 election being known, they rose to more than their former strength. The revival of national credit, a firm belief in the future, and patriots looked anxiously for a young Minister might stave off disaster.

The King's Speech laid stress on the East India Company. Within the hour the House could not possibly hope to pass a resolution. Urged Alderman Sawbridge not to move a motion in favour of Parliamentary reform, he forward himself in the session. He pressed the matter to a division, of seventy-four against

The way being thus left clear for the two great questions, would admit of no delay, Pitt sought to lay the ghost of bankruptcy. The imminence of the danger could not be realized. In that decade we link together the thought of bankruptcy with that of France; but if those years close with the Revolution in France and prosperity in England, there can be ascribed very largely to the wasteful financial system at Versailles and to the wise husbanding of Britain's resources by Pitt. According to the French statesman, Necker, the National Debts of the two countries were almost exactly equal. Pamphlet literature of the years 1783-84 reveals a state of financial wellnigh as serious in England as that which brought about the crash in France. One of the closest students of financial affairs in a pamphlet of the early part of 1783, stated that the North Ministry openly avowed its inability to pay the interest on public debts; and he asserted that such helpless confession would carry us fast to the brink of disaster. Another writer, in order to abolish the National Debt, tithes must be levied on the revenues of the Church reformed, and all clergy must submit to the payment of one-sixth part of their incomes towards the National Debt, which amounted to £215,717,709 in 1783, was denounced in language whose extravagance would cause a mild surprise to a generation that placed the national burden nearly four times as great; but, to a kingdom that with the utmost difficulty raised £25,000,000 in revenue, such a demand seemed overwhelming. Dr. Price summed up a gloomy conviction in his statement that the growth of the national debt about increased subservience to the Crown, prosperity to speculators and jobbers, and depression to all honest traders.<sup>1</sup>

The war which ended in 1783 had been carried on in a particularly wasteful manner. Price computed that the total of the National Debt owing to the war had been £110,000,000 in January 1783, when all the accounts had not yet been settled. He also reckoned that the last four years of that struggle had cost £80,016,000 as against £60,835,000 for the last four years of the Seven Years' War. This increase resulted largely

reckless way in which North had issued loans and subscribers, and, it is said, the Ministers had made large profits, while the nation suffered. The loans which cost the nation £85,857,691, and the exchequer only £57,500,000.<sup>1</sup> This resulted from the practices, but also from North's endeavour to reduce the rate of interest to three or four per cent.; the consequence of the impaired state of public credit of the year 1763. £150 of stock in the three per cents and annuities at five per cents for every £100 actually borrowed. The sum of £12,000,000 on these terms actually cost the nation £21,000,000; and interest had to be paid which never came into the exchequer. Obviously it was much better to raise £100 for £100 stock, even at five per cent. interest; for the experience of the year 1763, and time of peace and prosperity the rate of interest could be raised without much difficulty. Nevertheless, the Government always preferred to keep to a low rate of interest at the cost of tempting lenders by allotting £175 of stock for every £100 of cash.

Such was the state of affairs when Pitt introduced his bill (30th June 1784). It will be convenient to consider his proposals singly and in connection with the difficulties he had to face. The first was the appallingly large debt swollen by the coming in of bills for war and the necessity of peace and retrenchment had to counteract. In his efforts to balance income and expenditure he had to borrow a loan of £6,000,000. Obviously, as Consols were at 58, he could borrow only on exorbitant terms. It was probable that he now fell back on North's system of borrowing at a low rate of interest and of burdening the nation with a large amount of fictitious debt. He proposed to give the subscriber of £100 no less an amount of stock than £100 at three per cents, £50 of four per cents, and 5s. of five per cents, besides three fifths of a lottery ticket in a loan of £100. He computed that the terms and chances no

to lend.<sup>1</sup> This was so. But, for the reasons stated a dens bequeathed to posterity were crushing, though those entailed by North's loan of 1781.

As regards Pitt's personal dealings with financiers shone radiantly clear when contrasted with those of his predecessor. It had been the custom for that guardian of the public purse to arrange the price of the loan with a few favoured members of the City, and then allot scrip on scandalously low terms to his friends in Parliament, who could thereafter sell at a profit. Pitt now threw open to public competition the subscription to his loan; and the proposals sent in were formally accepted by the Bank in a way which precluded jobbery and speculation at the nation's interests.

Scarcely less serious was the problem of the huge, unfunded, debt, that is, that portion of the National Debt for which no provision whatever had been made by Parliament. The main part of it consisted of unpaid bills, which had been issued at about one quarter or even one third of their original value. It now stood at about £14,000,000. Pitt ardently desired to fund the whole of it, but he found that so great an effort would cause too much disturbance in the money market. He therefore proposed to fund at present only £6,000,000, forming a new loan bearing 5 per cent. interest and issued at 93. He justified this high rate of interest on the ground that such a loan would in the future be redeemed on more favourable terms than the 5 per cent. stock which might be worth a comparatively small sum when capitalized. The argument was surely just as in the case of the former loan of £6,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

It still remains to notice the worst ills that beset the commercial life of our land. Indeed, we shall not undertake a comprehensive view of the losses, both material and moral, which resulted from the extraordinary prevalence of smuggling. Never had contraband trade been so active as in the years 1793-4, should it be otherwise, when the customs dues were

involved nearly as much expense and delay for Canada.<sup>1</sup> In such a state of things illicit recruiting recruits from the ranks of honest mercantile

For monopoly, too, depressed their calling the smuggler. By far the most important monopoly was tea. That expensive luxury Queen Anne, a "dish of tea," was now the comfort of the many. Indeed, Arthur Young found tea had spread into the homes of cottagers as extravagant those villages which owed their prosperity and commended the frugality of those who brewed ale.<sup>2</sup> The increased use of Bohea was due to the East India Company or to the State; "drug" at the high prices warranted by its trade with China; and on the arrival of the product on our shores, an *ad valorem* duty of 119 per cent. The increase of habits which Arthur Young decried as a dis-  
 tance reformers now applaud was due to smuggling. Adam Smith that Dutch, French, and Spanish supported tea largely;<sup>3</sup> and from their ports it was conveyed it to our shores, there to be eaten by a populace which found the cheating of the smuggler more attractive and gainful than agriculture. To show how deeply the coast population was infected, the barns which the tourist admires in many a village, more often held contraband than corn. It has shown how the dull life of a Wessex peasant was enlivened by the news of a successful "run in," and how all the other feat the "King's men." The poet Crabbe, in his poem of the stern realities of life in his parish of Alford, speaks of the grief at finding there, not the simple home of an English village,

But a bold, artful, surly savage

Their sport was not cricket or wrestling  
 but smuggling.

To load the ready steed with guilty haste,  
To fly with terror o'er the pathless waste,  
Or, when detected in their straggling course,  
To foil their foes by cunning or by force,  
Or yielding part (which equal knaves demand)  
To gain a lawless passport through the land.

These are the words of a moralist. To the easy-going smuggler was merely a plucky fellow who cheated the foe of all, the Government, and helped poor folks to tea, and tobacco at cheap prices. As for showing any to buy smuggled goods, this seemed "a pedantic piece of crisy."<sup>1</sup> It must also be admitted that Government looked against light; for the great reduction of the tea duty in 1745 had almost put an end to smuggling in that a unfortunately his successors, when confronted with the war, re-imposed the old duties and thereby gave new smuggler's calling.<sup>2</sup>

The excess of an evil sometimes works its cure. The stupidity of the fiscal regulations in France which turned the attention of her most original thinkers to the national finance; whence it came about that Political Economy had its first beginnings in the land where waste and extravagance were rampant. So, too, it was reserved for the son of a customs officer to note early in life the follies of our system, when further enlightened by contact with men and especially with the French *Économistes*, he was able to give the world that illuminating survey of a subject where error and prejudice had previously reigned supreme. Finally, in the very darkest hour of Britain's commercial annals that remedial measures were set on foot by a statesman who had laid to heart the teachings of the *Principles of Nations*."

It is not easy to say whether Pitt owed more to Adam Smith or to Earl Shelburne. Probably the influence of the latter thinker on the young statesman at this time has been underrated; for it seems certain that the later editions of the *Principles of Nations* were modified so as to bring them into



knowledge of his debt to Adam Smith. In his speech of 1792, when he expressed the philosopher, then deceased, had given to the world the key to all commercial and economic questions. Pitt in 1784 owed less to Adam Smith than to Charles Shelburne, and to other men of affairs, including his in-law, that able though eccentric nobleman. Charles Shelburne was the depository of the enlightened age; and, as Price pointed out, he and Pitt were about to make reforms in the public service which saved the revenue some half a million a year.

Now, with a freer hand, he took up where the Coalition of Fox and North had interrupted him. In which supplemented his Budget, he proposed to get something from under the smuggler by reducing the duty on tea from an average of 119 per cent. to  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the common though on the finer kinds of tea (Suchong) he imposed a higher scale of duties.<sup>2</sup> Even so the produce of the tea duty would sink at once from £169,000, though he must have hoped so to make up part of this sum. As there was a large deficiency, it was necessary to devise a tax which would make up the temporary loss with no risk of leakage.

Such a source of revenue Pitt found in the window-tax. Every house with seven windows paid not four shillings, but seven shillings a year. With eight windows eight shillings were paid, and with more than ten windows paid more. He reckoned the increase from this tax would be £700,000. Whatever objections might be made on the score of health, it certainly fell mainly on the wealthy classes; for as many as 300,000 windows went duty free. The impost may therefore be regarded as the first rough attempt at taxation according to the principle that was beneficial in another way. The old canon violated the canon of taxation laid down by Aristotle: a tax should take from the pockets of the rich.

attempt to enforce it probably cost the country more tax yielded. The window tax belonged to the class duties the expenses of which amounted only to about 1 per cent. of the total yield; and the new impost could not be evaded except by the heroic remedy of blocking up

Thus, both in regard to economic doctrine and commerce (the former is but the latter systematized) Pitt's ex-ushered in a new era in British finance and therefore commerce. The City of London welcomed the change promised to lead to the employment of twenty more ships for the China tea-trade and to the destruction of the band tea-trade to these shores carried on hitherto by the and Dutch East India Companies. Indeed, no sooner the Commutation Bill (as it was called) gain general assent the Dutch Company offered to sell to us its cargoes at a loss of 40 per cent. on prime cost and expenses. This ought to have stilled all opposition to the measure; but he continued to oppose it with a vehemence worthy of the cause; he was ultimately beaten by 143 votes to 40 (10th Nov. 1784).<sup>1</sup>

We may note here that by further regulations of the and by what was called the "Manifest Act" of 1786, the revenue were made far more difficult. Thus to Pitt the credit of having done more than any minister (for he succeeded where Walpole largely failed) to stop a material a grave moral evil.

It would be incorrect to claim that Pitt was the first on the idea of substituting lower and effective duties for exorbitant and ineffective duty on tea. William Eden (Lord Auckland) declared that very many persons had suggested some such change, and he attributed to Lord John Cavendish the formation of the revenue committee, the results of whose inquiries were now utilized by the Prime Minister. Pitt, on the other hand, gave the credit of the measure to his relative, John Mahon. The mention of that nobleman reminds us of another which enlivened the debate. While sawing the air in

The details of the Budget itself do not belie the belief in the principles of what is called the Budget. It has been shown, the difficulties in Pitt's way of raising a new loan, the funding operation, and the operation of the funded debt altogether entailed an added charge of £1,000,000 a year. This sum he proposed to raise by a new tax, termed old-fashioned. Looking round the country he singled out for taxation the few articles which were or were only lightly burdened. Men's hats were taxed at a toll of two shillings a-piece (felt hats only), which would bring £150,000 to the nation's purse; female hats (gauzes) was mulcted to the extent of £120,000; he estimated that a duty of three shillings on evening dresses (not only in London as heretofore, but throughout the country) would bring in about £150,000; but he proposed to levy on its operations all manufacturers who made articles for competition. Further, he imposed a tax on carriages for riding or for pleasure, which he estimated would bring in £100,000. He eked out the remainder of the sum by duties on wine, and calicoes, candles, hackney coaches, by a tax on licences for shooting, and licences for trade.

Most of these proposals were received with disapproval. Several members urgently protested against the proposals as likely to be ruinous to industry, and to draw it. This, however, led him to impose a tax on the (especially winners), to raise the licence from one guinea to two guineas, to increase the postage on letters to curtail the privileges of franking letters to the House of Parliament. This had been disgracefully abused. Both Houses had the right both of sending and receiving letters free. As if this were not sufficient, there was an ordinary charge for the receiver of letters. Members were known to sell envelopes which they had franked. A large firm is said to have paid a man to frank their correspondence. Pitt struggled to reform the system, requiring that franked letters must bear the

deeply rooted that the abuses of "franking" persisted until the time of the complete abolition of the privilege in 1841. Penny postage became the law of the land. Thus in 1802 we find a distinguished diplomatist, Sir George Compton, commiserating his sister on the scarcity of noblemen which implied "a dearth of *frank-men* to fly to."

The effort to curb the abuses of that hateful class forms the best feature of Pitt's Budget of 1784. In other respects it is not remarkable. The new imposts have none of the attending his Commutation Act for the repression of smuggling. What is surprising is that he did not try the expedient of increasing the House Duty, an impost which fell mainly on the rich, was easy to collect, and could be made very restrictive.<sup>1</sup> It was actually tried by North in 1778, apparently with good results in Holland.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the measure was at hand, and only needed to be more strenuously pushed. I have failed to find in the Pitt Papers the reason why the statesman did not try this expedient; still less why he did not touch the niggling and irritating little taxes named above. He estimated the yield of the duties on bricks, paper, and coaches at no more than £50,000, £18,000, and £12,000 respectively. Further, the tax on candles, though only of one halfpenny the pound, was certainly burdensome to the poor. On this point it is not surprising that a rhymester thus set forth the condition of John Bull:

One would think there's not room one new impost to put  
From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.  
Like Job, thus John Bull his condition deploras,  
Very patient, indeed, and all covered with sores.

Other persons of a quasi-scientific turn sought comfort in the reflection that taxation ought, like the air, to press on every individual at all points in order not to be felt.

In truth, Pitt's financial genius matured slowly. He did not at first thought the situation too serious to admit of doubtful experiments. Certainly he went step by step, as is seen by his next Budget. Its most significant feature was

Department managed the taxes on carriages, male-servants; the new taxes on horses under the Commissioners of Stamps; while Commissioners administered the imposts on houses. In place of this complex, expensive, and inefficient system, he instituted a single "Board for Taxes," which worked more cheaply and left few loopholes for evasion. The names named above were thenceforth termed "Pitt's Taxes." In that year he also imposed taxes on professions, trades, and attorneys. Here again his fiscal policy was a departure from the old order of things, when men, besides the land tax, a widespread and very lucrative tax, grumbled at the duties on every article of consumption and the excise on every action of life. The days of a few simple taxes had not fully dawned.<sup>2</sup> The sequel was inevitable: under the intolerable pressure of the long war, Pitt worked his way to the Income Tax; and when he replied to the Lord Provost of Glasgow, who recommended that impost, show that, while he was on theoretical grounds, he doubted the propriety of imposing it systematically.

In 1785 we are still in the age of youthful enthusiasm. We find Pitt writing to Wilberforce on 15th September: "The produce of our revenue is now almost half mad with a project which will give almost of magic in the reduction of debt." In his letter to Lord Buckingham on 8th November 1785, he speaks of the rise of stocks being fully justified by a surplus of "£800,000 per annum at least, which is wanting to make good the complete military establishment." Both references are to the plan of a Sinking Fund, which was to work wonders with the National Debt, and to save two or three generations by the alchemy of compound interest.

The plan of a Sinking Fund was not originally named after Pitt. It came to bear Pitt's name. Walpole, earl of

started a scheme whereby a certain sum was annually set aside for forming a fund which would accumulate by compound interest and finally be available for the extinction of the National Debt. This plan came to grief, because in 1732 Walpole refused to draw on his own fund rather than increase the Land Tax to annoy country gentlemen. This, we may note, is one of the perils of a Sinking Fund that, guard it as its founder may, a thrifless Chancellor of the Exchequer will insist on drawing from it. That was the fate of Walpole's fund. The fund, however, survived, and received a new impulse in 1773 when Dr. Price, a Nonconformist minister, called public attention to it by a pamphlet on the National Debt. In this he demonstrated by irrefutable arithmetic that a Sinking Fund, if properly worked, must ultimately wipe out the largest debt that has ever been conceived. For, as he hopefully pointed out, a single acre, if its produce could be entirely set apart for sowing, would in the course of time multiply so vastly as to fill all the land in the world it could grow. This is true; but the simile implies that the powers of self-control in the sowers, especially if they are driven by hunger before that glorious climax is attained. Descending to the more practical domain of the money market, Dr. Price proved that a sum of £200,000, set apart annually, and invested with its compound interest, would in eighty-six years be worth £258,000,000. Whether the nation were at peace or at war, said Dr. Price, the stipulated sum must be set aside, even if it were borrowed at a high rate of interest; for the nation benefits at simple interest in order to gain the advantages of compound interest. While admitting the folly of such conduct for an individual, he maintained with equal *naïveté* that a State benefits by it, even if there were no surplus of revenue and the money were dear.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the scheme which fired Pitt with hope; but it is questionable whether he accepted all its details. Certainly he did not act precipitately. On 11th April 1785 he felt the pulse of the House of Commons by stating his confident expectation of having a surplus of one million available for the present year, and his determination next year to found "a good Sinking

million by taxation, not by borrowing. This has been ignored by Hamilton, McCulloch, and others in the course of Pitt's experiment; but the debate just closed is soon to be considered place it beyond question. Mr. Dempster urged him to begin at once to borrow, seeing that France had started a similar system "which would enable her in a few years to get rid of her National Debt." But the Prime Minister hurried, especially if he had to borrow at a high interest.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, then, Pitt did not share the views of Price.

His relations to Price cannot be wholly understood until in January 1786 he wrote to him in the following terms:

The situation of the revenue certainly makes it necessary to establish an effectual Sinking Fund. The general principle of 3 per cents with a fund bearing a higher rate of interest to facilitate redemption, you have on many occasions recommended particularly in the papers you were so good as to publish. The rise of the stocks has made a material change in the plan, I am inclined to think something like the plan now proposed is more adapted to the present circumstances.<sup>2</sup> There are some inaccuracies in the calculations, but not such as to vitiate the plan. Before I form any decisive opinion, I wish to consult you upon it, and shall think myself obliged to you if you can suggest if you think the principle a right one, and if which from your knowledge of the subject you

With his reply Price sent the three articles which the curious may peruse in his "Memoir and Correspondence." At least the ten volumes consecrated to his life by William Morgan, are instinct with so bit of truth as to show Pitt as to be worthless on all questions of finance. Price does not print Pitt's proposal, but brushes it aside, and gives the impression that Price did so. Price's account of the interview which Pitt had with him in January, but asserts that the Minister threw up the first proposals, adopted the third and least effective.

his benefactor.<sup>3</sup> The first of these charges can be Price's reply to Pitt's letter given above. He pronounced the Prime Minister's proposals "very just," but pointed out defects, especially the proviso which placed the Sinking Fund at the disposal of Parliament when the interest on it amounted to £4,000,000, as he expected it would by the year 1786. Morgan's unfairness is further revealed by his statement that Pitt did not choose to increase the taxes in 1786 so as to provide the million surplus which ought to have been forthcoming. Whereas the fact is that in the Budget of 1785 the Minister proposed taxes for that very purpose; and when these proved scarcely sufficient, he imposed others on 29th March 1786.

False and acrid charges such as these do not surprise in partisan biographies of that age. What is surprising is that McCulloch and Lecky should have endorsed some of these statements, especially respecting Pitt's omission of his acknowledgements to Price.<sup>4</sup> On this I must observe, firstly, that it is not proven that Pitt owed to Price everything that was done in his Sinking Fund, and spoiled the plan by his own alterations; secondly, for the omission of Pitt's proposal by Morgan without means of comparing the original proposals with the others; and thirdly, that the official reports of the three commissions of the spring of 1786 on this subject are so meagre as to afford no decisive evidence on what was, after all, a matter of opinion. Further, it is probable that Price's influence on Pitt was less than has been supposed. In the Pitt letter to Pulteney of 18th April 1786, Price urges him carefully to reconsider Price's third plan before adopting it. He states that Sir John Sinclair, Sir James Ferguson, Mr. Beaufoy, and Mr. Dempster had yes-terday seen Dr. Price at Bath House in order to discuss the merits of his plan, and also one by Mr. Gale. The discussion led to the conviction that Gale's plan was "infinitely better than any of the three produced by Dr. Price," and he proposed to add it to his Bill as an alternative.<sup>5</sup> I have not found any trace of Gale's plan or any evidence as to its adoption in parliament, but the statesman certainly repudiated the notion of



in order to pay off debt, on which Price yet by a strange irony of fate, this ex-statesman had temporary recourse only to is that which has been pronounced by characteristic part of his scheme.

The chief features of Pitt's proposals the whole of the annual million from revenue this fund from the depredations of war in the future.<sup>1</sup> He therefore placed it under the control of a select committee of respectable persons, among whom were the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England. The annual payment by Parliament of the fund when the year of issue arrived, if it should amount to four millions, may be regarded as a tribute to the financier to the parliamentary spirit.

The scheme met merely with indirect opposition, turning on general policy, or on the question of a surplus of a million, or any surplus at all. It was on issues to which the eager partisanship of the opposition sought to divert the attention of the House. When Fox exclaimed, of tying up a sum of a million, "they might want all their available resources," Sheridan, he sought to ridicule the expense on such grounds, but because it was the height of extravagance in the present enormous burdens when "we have to support the whole world."

There seems to have been in these days a general feeling against Dr. Price's schemes, though they then had not acquired the notoriety. Mention was made of the writer's opinion on the efficacy of Compound Interest; but the discussion confined itself almost entirely to complaints of gloomy prophecies about the advent of a new era, or some member of that angry and disappointed generation have accused Pitt of filching his scheme from Dr. Price, if the charge had been possible. Sheridan, instead of croaking over the state of Europe against England, would in that case have accused Pitt as the thief of the nation's money.

Price and the imposture of Pitt? The darling of Brookes, who well knew the perils of borrowing in order to pay debts, would have fastened on the folly of borrowing at high rates in order to gain the advantage of Compound Interest. We can picture him asking how a plan, which was a foolish one for an individual, could be profitable for a nation where the taxes could be raised that would make good the interest on the sums set apart every year for the wonder fund. Surely the Opposition was not so ignorant of the merits of Price's proposals as not to detect the weakness of the Minister's plan, had it been modelled solely on them.

The debates in which the Commons dealt with this complex subject seem to have been fruitful only in preparation for the final stage of the Bill, however, Fox moved an amendment with the aim of lightening the burdens on the nation in time of war. He proposed that, whenever a new loan was raised, the Minister should be pledged to raise money to pay the interest on the loan, and also to make good the Sinking Fund what might be taken from it. He stated as a concrete example that, if a new loan of £6,000,000 were raised in time of war, and if £1,000,000 were in the hands of the Commissioners of the National Debt, that sum should be taken out of the account of the loan; for this, he claimed, would save the public the expense of raising that million through borrowing on the Stock Exchange, and the Sinking Fund would not be injured if the million temporarily borrowed from it were made good by taxation. His speech contained one statement of personal interest, namely, that he had shown his proposal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who approved of it. This was one of the few occasions on which Pitt conferred with Fox. He now accepted Fox's amendment, because (to take the proposed case), apart from the saving of commission on the loan, the Government would be able to raise the five millions on more favourable terms than the six millions. Pitt also expressed the hope that the addition of the amendment to his Bill would do away with all temptation to a Minister to rob the Sinking Fund.

This last argument cut both ways. As Earl

(formerly Lord Mahon) pointed out that he had introduced a rival scheme a few days before Pitt had declared to be thenceforth impossible the mission to transfer the yearly million to the sinking fund. He tended to strengthen the argument by pointing out a case where expediency might be urged in favour of rendering the Sinking Fund permanent. But this was not discussed here; the debates on it were not held, the assent being given to Pitt's measure.

If we examine carefully the manner in which he levelled against Pitt's Sinking Fund the charges on the handling of the fund during the last years of George III. Every sciolist in finance can now see that the money at a high rate of interest in the sinking fund with its quarterly supply.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that he was on his own tail. But such a proceeding was quite contrary to Pitt's original intention, a thoroughly sound one of paying off the debt out of the annual surplus. He departed from the ordinary of circumstances which he looked on as temporary.

Strange to say, even the official historians have overlooked the fact that the nation was on its debt in a cumbrous attempt to get out of the pinch caused by the withdrawal of a large sum of money. felt, George Rose, the Secretary of the Sinking Fund as an example of impropriety. must in the highest degree promote the success of the sinking fund. And Lord Henry Petty, who suc-

Yet, delusive as the scheme came to be, it conferred benefits on Great Britain. Firstly, it tended to the reduction of the National Debt during the time of peace. Nine millions were written off in the years 1784-1792. The country felt no inconvenience until the million had been borrowed at ruinous rates. But, far more than this, the Sinking Fund buoyed up British credit at a time when confidence was the first essential of the public safety. In the days of 1797 and 1805 Britons were nerved by the example of their leader, who never quailed even in face of mutiny, or the near approach of bankruptcy. There are times when a justifiable trust is better than the most searching vigilance. Finally, it is the barest justice to the memory of Pitt to remember that his whole financial policy in the early part of the War rested on the assumption that France would be borne; and, as we shall see, that assumption was justified by the experience of the past and by every outward sign in the life of the French Republic. It was the incalculable element in the French Revolution from the *levée en masse* of 1793 down to Austria's defeat which baffled Pitt and metamorphosed his Sinking Fund into a load of lead.

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, *op. cit.* McCulloch admits only half that amount. MSS. (No. 275) is an account of the stocks purchased for the Fund up to 31st January 1796. They amounted to £18,000,000, equal to £80,000,000. See, too, Pitt's Memoranda on the Sinking Fund and Napoleon Miscellanea."

## CHAPTER IX

### REFORM

Unblest by Virtue, Government  
Becomes, a circling junto of the  
To rob by law; Religion mild,  
To tame the stooping soul, a trade  
To mask their rapine, and to slay

The distempers of monarchy were the great subject for redress in the last century; in this, the distemper of the present is the subject of the present.  
*Thoughts on the present Discontents.*

THE experience of statesmen has generally been to put together the question of retrenchment and of reform. The connection between these two topics is the nature of things. The brunt of taxation has fallen on the middle and artisan classes, who have only a small share in the government, and who are apt to run riot. Under an oligarchy the government is likely to become a close preserve for the landless younger sons, the preservation of which is thus assured by means which lower the level of cleanness and institutions. When

1784]

## REFORM

comes about that economists have for the most part pleaded a truly representative system.

As we have seen, Pitt had twice brought forward the question of the Reform of Parliament, and had twice suffered defeat. The need of caution was obvious; and this explains his conduct in begging that veteran reformer, Alderman Sawbridge, not to press his motion on this subject in the short session of May and August 1784. The Prime Minister, however, promised to bring it before the House of Commons early in the following session. Some surprise was therefore felt on the opening day, January 1785, when the King's Speech contained no promise more definite than that he would concur in every measure which would "secure the true principles of the constitution." Pitt himself, while admitting that the King's Speech might in the House be assumed to be the speech of the chief Minister, said that it was impossible to include in it a reference to that topic. The inference was obvious, that the King objected to its inclusion in the speech.

For Pitt's interest in the subject certainly had not cooled. In the spring of 1784 he had assured the Rev. Christopher Wyke and the Yorkshire Association of his devotion to the cause, in the following as yet unpublished letter.

London, March 11, 1784.

GENTLEMEN,

I consider myself greatly obliged to you for the favour of your letter, which I received upon the 6th instant. I beg leave to assure you that my zeal for Reform in Parliament is by no means abated, and I will ever exert my best endeavours to accomplish that important object.

lated access of prudence, he added it must in no case be published; but his wise opponent bruited it abroad, with the result that the House now contrasted his eagerness with his inability to secure any mention of it in the Commons. Pitt might declare that the subject was the subject of the House that nothing but its complexity prevented its coming into the line of his proposal; but members did not believe him. North made a skilful use of Wyvill's letter, and Pitt no definite disclaimer of the words. Pitt afterwards assured Wyvill that this was not his thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt judged that it would be best to keep the matter of Reform, perhaps because of Wyvill's letter to blow over, or because of the opposition in his Cabinet. Owing to these or other reasons he gave precedence to his resolutions for the abolition of trade to Ireland, which will be dealt with later, and not until 18 April 1785 did he bring forward the subject of parliamentary Reform. The subject was not ripe, for the trading classes were by no means ready for proposals which promised to bring in the working classes into labour.

Meanwhile Pitt drew up a draft scheme for the Reform of the Commons to Wyvill for his perusal. He proposed to give somewhat more than £1,000,000 in order to purchase in nomination boroughs, provided that the number should agree to forego their right of election to Parliament. In that case the boroughs would be the electors receiving compensation for

These suggestions strike us as strangely cramped, except in the matter of copyholds, which were dealt with more generously than in Earl Grey's Bill of 1831. The proposals for disfranchising the pocket boroughs resemble a political auctioneer dangling a million before the potwallers of Gotton, Gillingham, Castle Rising, etc., as the sole means of endowing the great counties with political power, and of enabling Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield to find articulate utterance. Burke in 1797 noted that these towns formed a part of Pitt's scheme of enfranchisement; but the Prime Minister does not seem in 1785 to have ventured distinctly to formulate so revolutionary a proposal. In the draft of a preamble to his Bill he suggested the advisability of enlarging the electorate in the case of several towns such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Winchester, where the Corporation or the Guild Merchant alone returned members of Parliament.

These draft proposals reveal the caution, not to say nervousness, with which Pitt approached this great subject, and the same characteristics appear in the speech of 15th April 1785, in which he introduced his measure. While lacking glow and enthusiasm, it was instinct with moderation and prudence. It started with the assumption that the House of Commons ought to be "an Assembly freely elected, between whom and the mass of the people there was the closest union and most perfect sympathy"; but he proceeded to allay the fears of those who, like Burke, saw in any change a death blow to the constitution, by disclaiming "vague and unlimited notions" and desired, he said, "a sober and practicable scheme which should have for its basis the original principle of representa-



shell? Coming next to the outlines of his plan that he would change neither the proportion of English members, as settled by the Act of 1728, nor the numbers of the House. All that he aimed at was to disenfranchise 36 decayed boroughs and add 72 members to the counties which most needed representation, as also to London and Westminster.

Moderation such as this implies timidity, and was not all. As we have seen, Pitt did not introduce this reform by compulsion; and he recognized as he did the monetary value of the franchise in decayed boroughs, he proposed to form a compensation which might gain compensation for this undoubtedly. He introduced this novel proposal by displaying an "English and maiden coyness" which members of the House there on a topic which they frankly discussed. For himself he faced the fact that the members of the House to Parliament had a certain right to the franchise, and therefore offered a due indemnity. Further, if any other decayed borough should wish to surrender, and to allot the two seats to any other borough which seemed most to need the franchise. Finally, the electorate in the counties by including freeholders of property was as secure as, sometimes more so, than the freeholders.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the proposals. They were introduced at a time when Pitt had suffered in the opinion of his friends by his obstinacy in persevering with the

ap clear of this absurd business - this Yorkshire system of reform." <sup>1</sup>

Despite this chilling reception, Pitt set forth his proposals with the attractions of a most seductive eloquence." Such testimony of Wraxall, which by itself would tend to rebut the venomous assertion that Pitt was not in earnest. The country is proved by his words and deeds. At Christmastide 1789 he begged Wilberforce to return from the south of France to work in the cause of Reform; and on 12th January 1790 wrote to the Duke of Rutland in these terms: "I really think I see more than ever the chance of effecting a safe and moderate plan [of Reform], and I think its success is essentially the credit, if not to the stability, of the present administration, as it is to the good government of the country hereafter." Further, it is certain that those ardent reformers, Robert Smith (afterwards Lord Carrington) and Wyvill, had no doubt of his earnestness. The latter stated in his letters that Pitt was giving his hardest to arouse interest in the Reform of Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

There is also ground for thinking that the King had privately warned him that, though he regretted his advocacy of Reform, he would not of his should influence any one against that measure. Wraxall, who voted against Pitt, admits that his plan of Reform was "highly attractive in theory - a phrase which leaves us wondering what would have been the practical scheme of reform to which this earth-born soul was dimly groping." Fox, who saw mortal danger to the body politic in the revival of the smallest rag of antiquity, complimented the Minister on the skill with which he had sought to make the change

had nothing better to say than that principle of compensation.

The chief arguments against the measure were made by Fox, and Bankes. The first declared that it was not a jot for Reform. Birmingham was not it. One of the members for Suffolk, who had constituents, had received no instruction to get up a Reform meeting in London, and the attendance of only three hundred persons at similar efforts in the provinces might be taken from "The Rehearsal":

What horrid sound of *silence* doth

As for Fox, though he voted with the majority to defeat the measure. He wittily explained to the people by their alarm at Pitt's Irish Reform, the point of emigrating from a land on which they should they trouble about its constitution. He objected to the award of any indemnity to the boroughs. The same point was shrewdly made. The measure, he said, was absurd on its face. To declare against the whole principle of compensation, and yet proceed to allow liberators to be traffickers? The argument was more clearly made in 1834 when Parliament awarded compensation to the owners. The taunt also came with an irony. A member and representative of Coffee Castle, but who was not a member of the House. He immediately arose and avowed that he was deeply on account of his long friendship with the Government.

had drawn near to the verge of civil war. In 1785 the t would have been peaceful and progressive. Pitt was to work by permissive methods, and to leave open the as to which of the rising industrial towns should gain chise as it was sold by the decaying boroughs. Such a advance seems to us that of a snail, and marked by a slime. But we must remember that the brains of that tion worked very slowly on political questions; for they had to do with a society which was to ours aln lake is to a torrent. Further, it is noteworthy that the buy out the pocket boroughs was the chief recommen Pitt's measure to the House of Commons. Burke pra for thus gilding his pill; and Dundas's chief plea measure was that it did not outrage "the sacred inher property." Alone among Pitt's supporters Bankes re these bartering methods. The attitude of the House s remembered, as it bears on the question how far justified in buying off the opposition of the Irish holders and others who suffered by the Act of Union o

Could Pitt have taken any further steps to ensure th of his Reform Bill? Mr. Lecky, followed in this historians, has maintained the affirmative. He avers making it a ministerial measure, Pitt could have brough on it all the influence of party discipline.<sup>1</sup> To this i replied that Pitt's majority, though large, was very ind As will appear in the next chapter, we find him writin could not then count on the support of many of his from one day to another. They had floated together wreckage of the Fox and North parties, and had as ye no distinct cohesion, except such as arose from adm

warily; and, except in the Warren French Commercial Treaty, he for that power of initiative which made the session of 1785. The fact is to be caution is manifest when we remember the blunder would have entailed a Fox-discords and confusion that must have alarmed the zealous reformers, while regretting the delay with Reform, continued to prefer his course. It appears in a letter written by Mackintosh of the year 1788. On the news of the death of George III, that veteran reformer wrote, "I have much fear that the King's presence will produce other derangements not for which we are not to be sold to the Coalition." When the Coalition arrived, and cabal, I doubt not, is laid out under his direction to overturn the Government, the distrust felt for Fox after his union with the full force even in 1788. Their action at the triumph of the Prince of Wales, we may see all political evils. This, I repeat, was the determination of Pitt to continue in the same course.

But other reasons must also have been considered. To shelve the question of Reform at the time the Cabinet was too divided on it to venture on a proposal which had a chance of success. It is a marvel was that a Prime Minister should have done so. Further, if we may judge from George III's conduct, the active though secret opposition to the measure was only by Pitt giving an unmistakable sign of his opposition if it were used against the measure. In the event of neutrality, Pitt could hardly go further than to remain in the lurch by breaking up his Cabinet.

whether collective or personal, had not then been established. Cabinets and individual Ministers resolute points of honour, or when they held that the Government no longer be satisfactorily carried on. But neither cases had arisen. The Government of the country could go on as well as before. True, a legislative measure of great importance had been rejected; but it cannot be clearly stated that in that century the chief work of Government was to govern, not to pass new laws. Far from it, in the next century the main business of a Cabinet came to be proposing and carrying through of new measures; but this was foreign to that more stationary age; and probably Pitt would have accused Pitt of deserting his post had he known of it. owing to his inability to carry a legislative enactment of doubtful character. Walpole has not been blamed for holding to office despite his failure to carry his very Excise Bill.

Again, why should Pitt have persevered with the Reform? Despite all the efforts of Wyvill and the Association, only eight petitions had been sent up to the House in favour of the measure. The taunts of North as to the apathy of the country were unanswerable. No voice was heard in protest against the measure; and the judgement of Wilberforce was that it was not really all reformers, that, after Pitt's failure, Reform was dead. Wyvill himself, in a pamphlet written amidst the excitement of 1793, admitted that Pitt's measure received little support in 1785, and soon fell into oblivion—a fact which he explained as the complete satisfaction which the nation then felt with the existing Ministry. Here we have the true explanation, furnished by a man who had his hand on the nation's pulse. Wyvill

embarrass him; but that he might ex-  
power, because "whenever he was to  
not founded on corruption, could stand

This estimate, by a practical politician,  
desire to depreciate Pitt and exalt the  
far towards explaining the symptoms  
thereafter noticeable in Pitt's career.  
superb parliamentarian dominating in  
outset, but rather an idealist, almost  
to lead his majority at his will by the  
principles, but now and again found the  
Humanity, but with humdrum men. As  
of his upward gazings, disconcerted his  
interests, and driven thenceforth to pre-  
judices of his party.

First in importance among the ex-  
driven after the spring of 1785 was the  
was shown in the Introduction, that  
political sense, denoted the system  
whereby the King and his Prime Minister  
of their policy. Peerages, bishoprics,  
sinecures and gauger-ships, were the da-  
Ministry in order to keep their sleek to-  
thin the ranks of the lean and hungry  
alone counted for much; for we find  
Fox-North Ministry of 1783, that the  
to create a single peer during their term  
or later be fatal to them. Government  
sions was looked upon as the natural re-  
the session of 1785 Pitt used "influence"  
date Wilberforce ventured on the vote  
that Pitt's command over Parliament at  
of 1784 was so great that he might "in-  
ciple" and have dispensed with "in-  
however, his admiration of him for re-  
trading politicians, a connection which

1785]

## REFORM

ruary-April 1785, to use "influence" more and more. V in his letters to the Duke of Rutland and Orde severa tions as to the management of members in the Irish Pa and he sought to conciliate waverers by other means. the abandonment of those clauses of the Irish Resoluti were most obnoxious to British traders, and an almo use of honours and places. This last expedient he ad willingly; for on 19th July 1785 he wrote to the Duke land that circumstances compelled him to recommen addition to the British peerage than he liked, and th very desirous not to increase it farther than was absolut sary.<sup>1</sup> This shows that his hand was forced either b leagues or by the exigencies of the time. Possibly the of peerages had to be made in order to secure the p the Irish Resolutions even in their modified form. It ating to reflect that this descent from a higher to a lo of policy thenceforth secured him a majority which fol lead, except on the isolated questions of the fortifi Portsmouth and Plymouth, and of the impeachment o Hastings, the latter of which he left entirely open.

It will be convenient to consider here the questi fortification of the chief national dockyards, as it s determination of the Prime Minister to secure econ efficiency in the public services. As we have seen, his was to carry out a work of revival in every sphere of th life. When thwarted in one direction he did not energies, but turned them into new channels. On the of the Irish Resolutions, he urged the Duke of Rutlan out the most practicable means of healing the discont



his strivings to reduce the Navy to the nation's defence.

Despite the many defects, he devoted much care and thought to the navy. He had instituted a Parliamentary fleet and the dockyards, which pointed the way to reform. The first line of defence also led him to a total of 18,000, a higher total than before, and he allotted the large sum of warships by contract. The nation which was ripe in the dock-

The letter which Sir John Barham wrote to him on the state of affairs. From his

The principle of our dockyard public economy in all its branches. He told them that they cannot go into higher stations. They have in the dockyards, that can only make the most of the money, that putting them when in their power small a voice as possible in great

In this and other letters to the that much might be done to firm and upright Minister. The and hard working official bestowed on naval affairs. Mr. Ryan Martin that Pitt had

lockyards, and twenty-four new sail-of-the-line were forth from private yards in the years 1783-1790. Thus, by the the Spanish war-scare in 1790, ninety-three line-of-battle were ready for commission.<sup>1</sup> The crises of the years 17 had also been so serious that they might speedily have war had not Britain's first line of defence been invincible.

In regard to the proposal to strengthen the defences of mouth and Plymouth, Pitt was less fortunate. The proposal came from the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance, was far from popular—a fact which perhaps influenced the of members. Though Pitt and other Ministers adduced reasons for not leaving those vital points in their present state, he did not carry the House of Commons with him in an exciting debate, which lasted till 7 a.m. of 28th Feb. 1786, the numbers on a division were found to be exact. Then there arose a shout such as had not been heard since a memorable vote which wrecked Lord North's Ministry: once all eyes turned to the Speaker, Cornwall. He stated that he was too exhausted to give his reasons, for his he would merely declare that the "Noes" had it. He stated that the sense of the House was against Pitt, the gentlemen especially disliking the addition of £2,000,000 next year's expenses.<sup>2</sup> One of the arguments of the Opposition seems to us curious. It was urged that the fortification of two towns in question might be the beginning of a system which would undermine the liberties of England. While treating this argument with the contempt it deserved, Pitt declared that he bowed before the feeling of the House. The commencement of huge works at Cherbourg last year must have caused much uneasiness to the watch-dogs

had not come from the Royal En tradicted.<sup>1</sup> Further, it should be the proposal his own, Dundas was known to dislike it. There is dwelt on, that the custom which on the rejection of any important lized into a rule.

This was the last severe check liament for many years. The fact three in twenty-two months with tige shows that his majority really to put Fox and North in power. question, as Fox knew, even when kept in office solely by the royal

Nevertheless in the years following weakening in Pitt's progressive was in his inmost convictions, towards the Tory position. Fox rivals in the year 1784, and again enabled him to link the cause nation. But these occasions were to owe a triumph to the mistakes conditions. For mistakes will be of life circumstances will arise according to elemental principles

Even before the French Revolution Pitt's reforming convictions, there as a touchstone. This was the p tion and Test Acts of the reign had excluded from office in comp all who would not receive the Sac of the Church of England. By the

position was yet one of hardship. Certain bodies scrupled to make money out of their conscientious ob. As is well known, the Corporation of the City of London upon the plan of augmenting the building fund of the Mansion House by passing a by-law in 1748 fining any Londoner who refused to serve when presented for nomination and then proposing rich Nonconformists for that office until 1767 did the able pronouncement of Lord Mansfield in the Upper House secure the rejection of this odious device. Forth Nonconformists secured immunity from fines for to serve in offices that were barred by the test of the Act of 1701.

Nevertheless their position was far from enviable. The freaks of insular logic Protestant Dissenters were allowed to vote in parliamentary elections and even to sit in the House of Commons; but though they had a share in the making and amending of laws, they could hold no office in a Corporation, any of the great London Companies; commissions in the army, navy, and offices in other public services were also closed to them. Severe penalties hung over the head of one who, in reliance on the annual Act of Indemnity, should to infringe any of these singular enactments. Public opinion approved this exclusiveness; and an anecdote told of a humorous mass of intolerance, Dr. Johnson, shows that justice was still keen in the circles which he frequented. Sir Robert Chambers, and John Scott (the future Lord Eldon) were walking in the gardens of New Inn Hall at Oxford

signally failed to suppress Dissent. Ashamed of these petty attempts of the Evangelical revival aroused the most sacred rite of the Church. Comprehension within the highly desirable; but clearly it by Erastian laws which enabled way into the Customs or Excise altar of the nearest church along.

Accordingly Nonconformists took their side in the session of 1787, of those exclusive statutes. A championed their cause in a very which won the admiration of W anomaly of retaining this old w expose to the penalties of the l if ever he returned to this count need be apprehended for the E the Act of Supremacy would c all Roman Catholics, as well as of the Protestant Dissenters had election of 1784, when they vo prerogatives of the Crown. He tinuance of enactments which " fication-desk for tax-gatherers followed with a strong plea f Locke and other writers who d ligious tests in political matters the Whig leader, was disgraced and, seeing that it represented

lishment, and it of necessity implied some restrictions outside its pale. The constitution of Society involved limit of individual rights; and he averred that the laws in were justified by that consideration. Further, there means whereby moderate Dissenters could be admitted privileges while the more violent were excluded. If all mitted, they might overthrow the outworks of the Establishment. These arguments carried the day by one hundred and six votes to ninety-eight (28th March 1787).<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Watson, of Llandaff, in his "Reminiscences," Pitt's conduct on this occasion. He declares that the Clerk of the Exchequer had no strong feelings of his own on the subject, and had therefore referred the matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Primate had assembled his colleagues both, and by ten votes to two they had decided to uphold the Caroline enactments. If this be correct, Pitt's action was certainly half-hearted, and utterly different in tone from his orations on Reform, the Regency, Slavery, and other topics which moved him deeply. Moreover, the bringing of a matter of this kind to the bench of bishops was not reasonable as taking the opinion of country squires on the proposed mitigation of the Game Laws, or of college doctors on the reform of their university. A Prime Minister abdicates his functions when he defers to the opinions of a class respecting a proposal which will trench on its prerogatives.

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvi, 780-832. On 8th May 1789, a similar measure proposed by Beaupuy was defeated by 122 votes to 102 (*Ibid.*, xxviii, 1-41).

## CHAPTER

### INDEX

"We hold ourselves bound to the native obligations of duty which bind us to all of Queen Victoria, 1st November 1855."

MONTAIGNE once uttered a warning to historians who "chew the matter in the process. He coupled with it a really far more serious, namely, the rules for judging, and "for bending for the presenting history in modern way of making it digestible except which seize facts and figures with as if by magic.

Further, the modern historian topical method that it is the only the infinity of topics of the last parliamentary debates and wars, for intrigues and philanthropic movements empire building, the efforts of government that would be

history can no longer be a detailed panorama of life, but and ought to be a series of companion pictures, informed personality of the artist and devoid of conscious prejudice.

Among the diverse subjects which confront us in the sidled career of Pitt, none stands more apart than that relations to India. Of his Herculean labours we may, per term this one the cleansing of the Augean stables. The c tion that clung about the Indian Government, the baffli moteness of its duties, the singular relations of the East Company to the Crown, and of its own officials to it, abo the storms of passion which had been aroused by the ma dealings of Warren Hastings and the furious invectives of presented a problem which could not be solved save b exercise of insight, patience, and wise forcefulness. It greatly overburden this narrative to recount the signal se albeit marred by deeds of severity and injustice, whereby ings grappled with the Mahratta War and the incur Hyder Ali into the Carnatic. All that need be remembere is that Parliament had censured some of his actions an mandated his recall, that the Court of Directors of the Co had endorsed that demand, but that the Court of Propriete annulled it. Hastings therefore remained at his post, ma would appear, from a conviction that he alone could sal British supremacy.

Accordingly, on this all important question there was d in the executive powers at Calcutta, and in the East Company itself; while the insubordination of very many Company's servants in India further revealed the insuffici Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773. Fortunately, he



were perfectly able to uphold extreme was touched by Fox and the affairs of the Company, which be a sink of corruption and iniquity home the wealth acquired by it he, the patronage of the India in the Directors or in the Crown influence from hands which had so

Pitt's position, it soon appeared these extremes. Four days later introduced his second India Bill in cumspedition. He started from the fashioned the outlines of his former though a charter ought not to over yet nothing but absolute necessity. The affairs of the Company, he extreme a measure. His aim was prove on, the existing plan of were two essentials to be aimed activity and resourcefulness in obedience to the measures dictated of these requisites could be attained Indian Government a certain doubt latter it resulted that that power of a regulating Board at home.

Pitt therefore resorted to his Governments of the Presidencies General, enough authority to emergency; but he also proposed consisting of members chosen

Such were the chief proposals. As for the spirit which formed the measures, it may be divined from that part of the speech in which the Prime Minister set forth the fundamental principles of our Indian policy. They were in brief the avoidance of war and of alliances that might lead to the use of such conciliatory methods as would further which we had chiefly in view—pacific commerce.<sup>1</sup>

Neither the spirit of enlightened patriotism, which animated the speech, nor the practical nature of the proposals prevented the measure from fierce opposition. That acrid opponent, Warren Hastings, Mr. Francis, taunted Pitt with leaving the Directors of the Company the mere shadow of authority. He prophesied that the large powers vested in the Governor-General and in the Governments of the Presidencies would be abused as flagrantly as ever they had been in the past. Fox answered these objections with his usual force, asserting that the large powers were given to the Crown, and that the Council-Board would be quite as partisan a body as the Committee to whom he in his India Bill had entrusted the management of power. He further insisted that to leave appointments to the Company, while depriving it of authority, was a miserable expedient which must sap the base of government. On the other side, the Directors of the Company complained that the proposed Bill at several points trenched on their trading rights which they had always expressly reserved to themselves. They urged that they must retain in their own hands the power of recalling their own servants. As for the proposed trial of disobedient officials, it seemed to them an untried and dangerous factory experiment, seeing that both trial by jury and

was clear that officials would mean in order to arrive at the

On the whole, however, the affairs from Westminster, who ingly asserted eleven years of fact of the situation. This constitution and powers of was to consist of six members by the King; the Chancellor the Secretaries of State being of these two, the senior member preside; and finally the Council to rest virtually with him, with Secretary of State for India. From a letter of Dundas to attended the Board regular business.

To this Board were submitted between the Company and which referred solely to trade of the Court of Directors and issued orders which the Board. Further, at the second reading allow the Board in urgent commands to India without Directors. Finally, if the Court decisions, the ultimate judge that is, with a body largely appealed.' While, therefore

was revived on an imposing scale; and the close relations subsisting between France and the Dutch Republic augured ill to the British dominions in the Orient. Everything, therefore, tended to emphasize the need of strong Government at Calcutta, and the attention directed to Indian affairs, consequent on the charges brought against Warren Hastings early in the year 1786, further convinced many competent judges of the need of strengthening the Indian executive. These considerations furnished the reasons which led Pitt to bring in an Amending Act.

If we may judge from Pitt's speeches of 17th and 22nd March of that year, he had been much impressed by the sagacity of the Governor-General in seeking to frame an alliance with the Great Mogul for the purpose of counterbalancing the offensive league of Tippoo Sahib with the French. The action of Hastings' Council in frustrating this statesmanlike plan, because it contravened the instructions of the Company, showed the unwisdom of doubling the hands of a competent governor, first by instructions drawn up in Leadenhall Street, and secondly by a Council, in which pedantry or personal spite could paralyze great enterprises. Obviously what was required was to choose the right man as Governor-General, then to grant him powers large enough to meet serious crises, and to place him in such a relation to the Home Government that those powers would not be abused. None of these conditions could be satisfied so long as the Company appointed the supreme officials and prescribed their functions.

But Pitt's Bill of 1784 had changed all this. As we have seen, the British Government was now the driving force of the Indian machinery, the Company acting merely as an intermediate wh-

powers were also conferred on the Governor of Bombay. Finally, the Governor-General was empowered to fill up any vacancy in the Council occasionally, and was also to act as Commander-in-Chief.

These far-reaching proposals caused a great outburst of feeling. He burst forth into a violent diatribe against the "rotten and bloody bones Bill." Pitt's first Indian Bill was an abortion of tyranny, an imperfectly digested and half-handed about as a show, but hypocrisy. The full-grown monster was before them.

And at his heels  
Leash'd in like hounds, shall famine  
Crouch for employment.

It was absurd, he said, to expect every man to be a despotism like that about to be set up in India. He owed most of its triumphs to the open operations of the Council. The joint experience of many men was more fallible judgements even of the best men. He outburst, which Burke must have regretted. He undertook his crusade against French rule in India. He poured the vials of his wrath on the measure, and then, with robbing the Council at Calcutta of its powers, he fled. This was not surprising, he said, for he obviously preferred speech to action. His actions presented a long record of success. The honourable gentleman desired only to decline to notice heated personalities, and to devote his time to the task of proving that the Bill cured the weaknesses of the Indian Government, and the present situation. This reply, quiet, dignified, and effective, carried the House with him by a majority of eight.

this autocracy was, after all, local and conditional—a fact which Burke overlooked or ignored. While wielding despotic authority in India, the new Viceroy was but an adjunct of the British constitutional machine. It is perhaps the highest of Pitt's achievements that he saw how to combine two ideals of Government, the oriental and the occidental, in a way that conducted to vigour of action in Bengal, and did not impair popular progress at home. While investing the real ruler of India with powers far greater than those wielded by Warren Hastings, he subordinated them to the will of King and Parliament.

It has been asserted that Pitt was weak as a legislator, but it will be well to notice this charge at the close of these volumes. But surely, when judged by all conceivable standards, his legislative Bills must take rank amongst the greatest of legislative achievements. For by those measures, Pitt subordinated the most powerful of all Companies to the British Parliament. By it, as we have seen, he harmonized the claims of a viceregal autocracy in the Orient with those of popular government at home, and he thereby saved the British Empire from the fate which befell that of Rome. Historians of the Roman Republic agree that the favourites of the Senate of the type of Verres who were loose on the provinces beyond the sea, not only proved the most frightful scourge to the subject peoples, but also undermined popular liberty at home by the unscrupulous use of their plundered hoards. The same system palsied the limbs of that Empire and drugged its brain. Whether the "nabobs" who rolled in from India and settled down in England would finally have exerted this doubly baleful influence, it is futile to inquire, had they gorged and bribed for several generations, the

man succeeded in the task of  
the ancient parliamentary syst

The first of the parliamentar  
whom Pitt early in 1784 desig  
of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland  
also early in 1785, he urged  
functions of Governor-Gener  
India; but the earl at that t  
powers of the Commander-in-C  
high hopes which Dundas had  
of Cornwallis, shown by his des  
in 1782, now led the Ministry  
ducing the Amending Act f  
Governor-General in cases of  
ingly accepted office; and in  
(1786-1793) British rule was a  
the attacks of the Mahrattas a  
of Bonaparte.

The same year which saw  
witnessed also the impeachme  
not concerned here with the  
material for that longest and  
What does concern us is the  
perhaps the most complex pro  
hood. Seeing that he was chie  
House of Commons which n  
part of the question cannot be  
to separate one of the charges

East India Company was often on the verge of bankruptcy. Undoubtedly the perpetual want of money led Hastings to the most questionable of his enterprises, the letting out of the company's troops to the Rajah of Oude for the purpose of driving out or subjecting the Rohillas, a race of freebooters on his western borders. But difficulties thickened with the outbreak of the war with the Mahrattas and the French. The climax came in 1780 when Hyder Ali, the usurper of Mysore, let loose his hordes upon the Carnatic, and threatened to sweep the British into the sea. Then it was that the genius of Hastings awoke to his full strength. He strained every nerve to send from the Home a large force of troops to the relief of the despairing settlers at Madras; and, money being an essential, he cast about for means of finding it without wholly depleting the exchequer of the embarrassed Company. Among other devices he pressed upon his feudatories, Cheyt Singh, Zamindar of Benares, for a sum of £50,000 in addition to the annual tribute. Seeing that the British held the paramountcy in India, and therefore enjoyed the right of calling on the vassal princes for help in time of emergency, his claim was reasonable, especially as Cheyt Singh's father had placed his position to the East India Company. After giving assistance in each of the years 1778-80, Cheyt Singh began to grow restive in 1780 when the demand was renewed, and showed signs of disloyalty. Hastings thereupon imposed a fine of £500,000. More than this, he went to Benares in person, hoping to browbeat the Zamindar; but, his following being scanty, the troops of the latter rose against him, and cooped him up in his residence. With the splendid coolness which never deserted him, he manfully faced the danger. Secretly he sent warning to



when we know that Burke derived his information from a poisoned source. Francis, the big game hunter, had been worsted by that master of the bow at Calcutta; and, on challenge, was wounded in fair fight. It was then that he, in 1781, returned to England to find the French and found them incarnate in Burke.

The genius which enabled him to be a serene and soul-satisfying judge of the French Revolution was allied with a more than feudal sense of honour left him at the mercy of first impressions. On all points of honour, whether personal or national, his generous nature carried him to extremes. The two incidents recounted above, which cooled but did not quench his indignation, which the French Revolution observed him to be a crusade against Hastings to participate in, egregiously failed. As Macaulay's untrustworthy essay on Warren Hastings began in 1781, survived the next decade, and lived on into the Victorian Era. Clearly it resulted in a different view on Indian affairs. Even today the facts of Hastings' career are well known and condemned by men of a similar bent. His policy appears statesmanlike in the wealth of benefits conferred on India, he paid little heed to miscarriages of justice incidental to an alien administration, he never ranged in hostile territory, nor

of his opponents. Burke had given notice of a hostile motion in the House of Commons; but, in the then discredited state of Opposition, it was unlikely to pass. Ministers for their part approved the conduct of Hastings. Pitt also must have been favourably impressed by an interview which took place towards the end of June. Unfortunately no account survives of what must have been a memorable meeting. Hastings was then fifty-two years of age, exactly double the span of life of the young Prime Minister. But the young statesman had by this time acquired the same faculty of controlling his feelings under a calm exterior which the Governor-General had perfected during years of dictatorial opposition at Calcutta. The countenance of the young man, thin and worn by the workings of a too active brain, must have struck the beholder of the noble lines of Milton:

Deep on his front engraven  
Deliberation sat and public care;  
And princely counsel in his face yet shone  
Majestic.

Undoubtedly they were then the ablest men of action in the country; and, despite envious surmises to the contrary, we are sure that Pitt looked with admiration on the placid features of the man whose gigantic toil had saved Britain. Both of them had the power of throwing off the care of the day and of indulging in playful intercourse with friends; and the ease of manner and conversation must have enlivened the interview.

Yet each was closely on his guard. The opposition to the India Bill of 1782 (for he it was who moved the vote of censure on Hastings in May 1782) must have coloured Pitt's feelings; and as we now believe that the India Bill of 1784 was

just. He was awaiting further information in this complicated case. We know that he sought an explanation of the terms of a zamindari settlement only in order to clear up some of the questions of the Zamindar of Benares.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while Lord and Lady Thurlow loudly proclaimed their confidence in Hastings, King continued to converse with him more than ever, and Queen Charlotte accepted a splendid dinner presented by his wife, Pitt remained guarded.

Many members of the Opposition wished to see the censure drop, and urged this at a private dinner at the Duke of Portland's residence shortly after the opening of Parliament in January 1786. But the zeal had not cooled with time. Further, on the subject of the censure they were pointedly challenged by an accredited agent of Hastings in the House of Commons, a poor champion. Verbose, tedious, and unconvincing on the same theme, he wearied the House with his long speeches before they came officially before it; and at the close of the great trial Fanny Burney remarked: "Hastings should have trusted his cause to himself. I believe—and indeed it is the general opinion of his friends and foes—that to his officious and injudicious prosecution is wholly owing."<sup>2</sup>

Yet Scott would scarcely have flung doubt upon the knowledge and consent of his friends. On these grounds it is probable that Hastings, with all his faults, preferred that the question should come before the House in a trial rather than swell with the accretion of innuendoes.<sup>3</sup> We must also remember

requested that the Clerk of the House should read Dundas's resolutions of censure of May 1782, and then ironically suggested that that gentleman, formerly the president of the special committee of the House, was the man who now ought to take action against the ex Viceroy. He himself was but a humble member of that committee, and he now looked, but in vain, to those in power to give effect to the earlier resolutions. "But I perceive," he said, with his eyes on Pitt, "that any operations by which three per cents may be raised in value affect Ministers more deeply than the violated rights of millions of the human race." Dundas, never an effective speaker, failed to wriggle away from the charge of inconsistency thus pointedly driven home. The attitude of Pitt was calm and dignified. In the course of the adjourned debate he professed his neutrality on the question. While commending Burke for the moderation with which he then urged his demands, he admitted that the charges brought against Hastings ought to be investigated and his guilt or innocence proved by incontestable evidence. "I am," he said, "neither a determined friend nor foe of Mr. Hastings, but I support the principles of justice and equity. I recommend a dispassionate investigation, leaving every man to follow the pulse of his own mind."

This declaration of neutrality, the import of which will appear in the sequel, did not imply that there was to be no investigation. The challenge having been thrown down, the tournament was bound to proceed. Thenceforth Pitt confined himself to the functions of arbiter. Burke now enlarged his motion so as to include all the official correspondence respecting Oude, whereupon the Minister urged him always to state his reasons.

an obviously necessary veto in the  
ments.

In view of the charges of gross impropriety brought against Pitt on the Hastings trial, he looked into details somewhat closely. He returned to the charge by producing papers respecting the recent peace negotiations on cognate subjects. At once Dundas took ground that very many of those documents were of confidential character, revealing, as they were, whereby the Mahratta confederacy was betrayed. Of his speech Pitt declared that Hastings spoke "with an address and ingenuity that was extraordinary." But he added that other charges against him were substantiated. In vain did Fox and Burke hold out documents bearing on the trial. The action of the House was against them. A vote of censure on Ministers, as did eighty-seven to thirty-four on a division. A similar motion for the production of papers relative to Delhi was carried three days later.

On Fox renewing his demand for the production of the papers, Pitt took occasion to state his views. He said that were called for in order to set on foot a motion, the mover required the mover to "show a probability of success; secondly, that the papers were necessary to prove guilt; the third condition was that the papers should not suffer by publication." He then proceeded to state the action of Hastings in seeking to form an alliance with the Mogul (despite the orders of the Council).

Delhi papers. In spite of the slap-dash assertions of Sheridan that the contents of those papers were perfectly well known, the House upheld Pitt's decision by 149 votes to 73.

The next move of the prosecutors was to demand the presence of certain witnesses at the bar of the House. The Master of Rolls objected on points of form, and also protested against appearance of pamphlets hostile to Hastings which had been industriously circulated among the members of both Houses. Burke then admitted that most of the State Papers asked had been granted, though some had been denied, but afterwards complained that Ministers were now trying to quash the prosecution. 'Pitt did not speak.' On 26th April Burke brought forward two more charges, whereupon Pitt remarked that they contained much criminal matter, but he had formed no opinion as to their correctness; he hoped that it would appear otherwise, but the House must examine them with the utmost impartiality. Having taunted him with pretending to see no guilt where he saw too much, Pitt deprecated such outbursts. Later in the debate he demurred to the examination of witnesses called by the prosecutors before Hastings himself had been heard at the bar. Justice, he said, demanded that the accused should have a hearing before the accusers substantiated their case. He declared that he would not consent to the examination of witnesses, still less to vote the impeachment of Hastings, on vague and indefinite charges as yet before the House. With force expressed the hope that the Minister would persevere on the steady path he had pursued and would not be driven from it by the intemperate attacks of opponents. Burke inveighed against Pitt's decision, but the latter carried the day by

they knew little and cared less. Accordingly, he had a chance of success that Burke, after long preparation, brought forward his charges on 13th June 1782. On 13th June he introduced them. Grenville defended the conduct of Hastings, that the Rohillas had by their raids provoked the war, and that it was well to remove them. Dundas censured Hastings, maintained that, while the Governor-General was called for it twelve years ago, there was no ground for it now, especially as in the interval he had been named Governor-General. Wilkes, who weighed much with Pitt, took the same view. A significant speech of the defence was that on the behalf of Hastings' honour, urged the House to send the matter to the House of Lords, where alone a full verdict could be pronounced.<sup>1</sup> Pitt spoke only on a small point, and voted with Grenville and Dundas. Despite the speech by Fox, the House sided with the ministerial view, and at half-past seven on the 3rd June rejected Burke's motion by 119 votes.

Undaunted by this further rebuff, Fox next day brought up the charge relating to the conduct of Singh, Zamindar of Benares.<sup>2</sup> He allowed that Hastings was in power twelve years after the war, but did not imply that Parliament had condoned the plea could not be urged respecting the Benares. He showed that the Company had agreed to the independence of the Zamindar of Benares, and that he pressed on him remorselessly for aids in the war, and had finally mulcted the exhausted pr

facilities appear greater, his marshalling of facts more lucid, or his elocution more easy and graceful. This is the more remarkable as the young Minister avowed his desire on personal grounds to absent himself from the discussion of so complex and remote a problem. We also know from his letter of 10th June to Eden, that he had "hardly hours enough to read all the papers on that voluminous article" (the *Benares charges*). It is therefore clear that he formed his judgement within a very short time of his speech. In this, however, he soon showed that he had probed the intricacies of the question. Setting forth in detail the terms of a zamindar's tenure, he disproved Fox's contention that the Company had no right to exact an "aid" from an "independent rajah." He demurred to the epithet "independent," at least as regarded the supreme power in India. The sovereign power has as good a right in time of crisis to exact "aids" from its feudatories as any Suzerain in Europe from his feudal dependents. Next he crushed Francis by citing his own written opinion that extraordinary demands might be exacted from such feudatories. Having set forth the question in its true light, and exposed the inconsistency and malice of Francis, he approached the crux of the whole problem, whether the fine ultimately exacted from Chyot Singh was not excessive. Here he objected to the drawing of precedents solely from the days of the Indian Emperors. It was the duty of every British administrator to behave according to the rules of justice and liberty; and, said he, "On this ground I feel it impossible to acquit Mr. Hastings of the whole of the charge brought against him; for I feel in my conscience that he has pushed the exercise of that arbitrary discretion which, from the nature of the Eastern



for though Grenville, Lord Mulgrave, and (Pepper Arden) spoke against the Prime Minister, the opinion of the last named prevailed; the House voted 179 to 79, or about the same numbers as in the last charge. The conduct of Pitt on this occasion was violently assailed. Wraxall, writing many years afterwards, that it was a sudden and unaccountable change, further suggested that the jealousy which Lord Dundas bore for the superior abilities of Pitt, influenced Pitt's action.

As the insinuation has been endlessly repeated, I am pardoned for dwelling on it somewhat fully, and for tricked out with a wealth of details. On the 12th of June, Pitt issued a Treasury circular calling for the attendance of porters on the 13th of June, as if it were the day of Hastings. No proof of this statement has been produced; there are good grounds for disbelieving it. It should be remembered that attendance at the House was greatly thinned by the Whitsuntide holidays, which were just over; and, as everyone acquainted with the House knows, a full House was hardly to be expected sitting afterwards. Pitt's letter of 10th June contained the following sentence. After stating that the debate had been a short and languid debate, and that only thirty-three, he continues: "We shall proceed to the vote on Monday next Tuesday when Mr. Fox moves for the removal of Benares; and after that our chief difficulty will be to find a House for the next fortnight. In the time of the day, hours enough to read all the papers necessary to our article."<sup>1</sup>

fact that neither he nor Foulton refers to the calumny prior to the lateness of its origin. Further, if a special "whip" had been sent out for the support of Hastings, would not some of the Viceroy's friends, especially Major Scott, have exposed the fraud? But no reference to it is to be found in the report of the debate. Are we also to suppose that the forty or fifty members who changed sides with Pitt, would have gone over to the accusers if he had been guilty of such duplicity? Finally, clear from the remarks of Grenville, Mulgrave, and Pepper are those that even the colleagues of Pitt felt perfectly free to vote as they chose. Mulgrave declared that the Prime Minister would not fit to remain in office a single day if he expected his friends and associates to give up their opinions on this subject. Pitt, as we have seen, had at the outset called on members to exercise their impartiality; and he now assented to Mulgrave's statement. The story that Pitt sent round a "whip" for the support of Hastings, and then drove his followers like sheep into the opposite lobby, may therefore be dismissed as a malicious fiction, in variance with all the known facts of the case.

Then again it is stated by Lord Campbell in his sketch of the life of Lord Ebbon, that Pitt mysteriously abandoned Hastings "and . . . contrary to the wish of Lord Thurlow who had a scheme for making Hastings a peer, perhaps a Minister . . . gave him up to impeachment." The charge is made in a very loose way; on it the detractors of Pitt have built a theory that Dundas he feared the advent of Hastings to the India Board, or to the Ministry, or to the House of Lords. This story has been varied and amplified, so that in one version George III appears as desirous of forcing him into the Cabinet, or granting him a peerage.

likely enough; but it is certain that the King thrusting the ex-Viceroy into the Cabinet of Control, or of raising him to the House of Commons, without the approval of his Prime Minister. The King's chief desire then was to meet the expenses of his family; and Pitt's economic continuance in power at that time especially his condescension towards Hastings set all tongues wagging. They have wagged ever since on the malignancy of Dundas, and the gross inconsistency of Pitt; but these are of the flimsiest character. Wraxall and others later on jotted down their impressions and asserted that Dundas had somehow become unpopular. The King intended to eject him from the India Office and put Hastings in his place. But neither of these things happened. Wraxall merely stated that "the public body feared such a change."<sup>2</sup> Bland Burges averred that "by some means" come to know the secret of the King, and therefore "sedulously fanned Mr. Pitt's uneasiness and so alarmed his mind that he made a hasty decision before he had time to satisfy himself of the expediency."<sup>3</sup>

Equally unconvincing is the story, which was told some thirty years later, that on the 11th of June Dundas called on Pitt, remained closeted with him for hours, and convinced him that they must remove the Viceroy. The insinuation conveyed in this story is that Pitt was then and there won over by Dundas's mean motives mentioned above. The ingratitude to seek for petty personal pretexts rather than the generous and more obvious causes seems

ever been forthcoming; but, fortunately, on the all important question of motive, we have the clear testimony of one who knew Pitt most intimately, and whose political differences never tortured his imagination. Wilberforce, who had followed Pitt's actions closely throughout the case, afterwards declared justice had not been done to Pitt:

People [he said] were asking what could make Pitt support [Hastings] on this point and on that, as if he was acting from political motives, whereas he was always weighing in every particular what Hastings had exceeded the discretionary power lodged in him. I remember (I could swear to it now) Pitt listening most attentive some facts which were coming out either in the first or second case beckoned me over, and went with me behind the chair, and said "not this look very ill to you?" "Very bad indeed." He then returned to his place and made his speech, giving up Hastings's case. He paid much impartial attention to it as if he were a jurymen.<sup>1</sup>

Here we have evidence at first hand, though belonging to Wilberforce's later years. Clearly it must refer to the event of 14th June, and it shows that if any one person was responsible for Pitt's change of front that person was Wilberforce. In his life the philanthropist declared that Pitt's regard for truth was exceptionally keen, springing as it did "from a moral principle which appeared to be a part of his nature." He also added "the want of simplicity and frankness sometimes observable in his answers really sprang from this scrupulous veracity."

To quote the opinion of another experienced politician William Pulteney wrote to Pitt the following hitherto unpublished letter:

unpunished and uncensured, when guilty of insufficient to foster the bad and corrupt principles in lay a foundation for similar and greater offences thanks, and I am sure will have the thanks of importance of your conduct.

Few persons did understand his conduct kept his lips sealed. Nevertheless to all unconduct needed no defence. On that high and justice are alone considered (for just Pitt did not swerve from the principles down. From the beginning of the Hastings to hold the balances even. He left it open differ from him. He refused the publication to Hastings where they compromised the the characters of our Indian feudatories. charges against Hastings should be clear he should be allowed to answer those charges. topic of the Rohilla War he did not speak his mind was not made up. The fact that times re-appointed Hastings after that verdict did in a technical sense screen him from plea on the Benares affair, no such plea could question on which the present Parliament

The enormous vogue enjoyed by Macaulay compels me once more to notice his treatment of the Benares charge. A man of philosophic temper expressed a wish that he was as sure about a Whig historian was about everything. This through the veil of diffidence which Macaulay delivered the verdict, that any man with abilities ought to have convicted Hastings and acquitted him on the Benares charge." this assertion Macaulay passed by the

the Benares case, so that they seem to turn ultimately on a trumpery question whether the fine inflicted on the Zamindar was rather too large or not. But we may ask, firstly, was a small affair to exact half a million sterling from a prince who during three years had been hard pressed, and as a matter of fact had paid up the arrears for which that fine was imposed? Did it concern the Zamindar alone? Did it not concern all subjects from whom that half million must ultimately be wrung?

Not only did the conduct of Hastings far exceed the limit required by justice; it was also bound up with a question which the stability of our Indian Empire has ever rested on, long as the feudatories of the British Raj feel confidence in a sense of justice, India is safe. Whenever they have cause to believe that injustice and oppression are the characteristic of his rule, the foundations of the Indian Empire are shaken, and their base. Not without reason did Fox declare that the decision on the Benares affair was vital to the preservation of our ascendancy in Bengal. The statesmanlike eye of Pitt, we may be sure, discerned the same truth. Besides, there was an additional reason why he should now more than ever resolve to ring the names of Justice and Mercy on the newly formed arch of Indian Government. As has been shown, the recent India Bill placed greatly increased powers in the hands of the Governor-General. Burke and Fox had taunted Pitt with setting up despotism from which endless suffering must flow. The charge was hollow, but, adorned as it was by splendid rhetoric, it created a deep impression. Was it not well, then, to show a concrete example that any Viceroy who violated the principles of justice and mercy, together with religion and honesty, at Westminster

sensationally brilliant oration of Sheridan moved the House so much as the silent but expressed in Pitt's vote.<sup>1</sup> The impeachment inevitable.

With the forensic pageant that ensued concerned. Thenceforth the case belonged to the domain. Its duration throughout the certainly discreditable to British law. Hastings' affluent fortunes spent some £71,000 in the actions,<sup>2</sup> and at last secured an acquittal. Europe forgot the case amidst the potent French Revolution, the effect of it was not. The comparative calm which settled between twelve years may be attributed largely to confidence in the sense of justice of our people. In the year 1786 princes and peasants alike most transcendent services, if smirched with would never screen a Viceroy from the censure of Parliament.

<sup>1</sup> For a hostile account of Pitt's conduct here, P.," 81-9.

<sup>2</sup> "Hist. of the Trial of Warren Hastings," pt. v, 3 on 31st January 1786 was given as £65,313, exacted over to Mrs. Hastings.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE IRISH PROBLEM

(1785)

We have the satisfaction of having proposed a system which will be discredited even by its failure, and we must wait time and season carrying it into effect. **PITT TO THE DUKE OF RUTLAND, 17th Nov. 1785.**

**T**HERE is a story, uncertain as to date and origin, which picturesquely describes Pitt's indebtedness to the author of "The Wealth of Nations." Adam Smith had been invited to meet the young Prime Minister at dinner, but some mishap delayed his arrival. Nevertheless, the guests patiently waited for him, and on his entrance Pitt exclaimed, "Nay, we will not sit until you are seated; for we are all your scholars." The compliment came with none the less graciousness because the father of Political Economy had in his work incautiously defined a statesman as "that insidious and crafty animal." Pitt was to give a new connotation to the word. Almost alone among the politicians of the eighteenth century, he had set himself to gain a store of knowledge which would enable him to cope with the increasingly complex problems of his craft, and thus, in an age when a university degree, the grand tour, and London ex-



these questions had been disposed will engage our attention in a question Adam Smith strongly Britain as conferring on the small breathed new life into Scotland, deliverance from an oppressive do

These contentions must have seen the outlines of his policy both to a striking resemblance to those Nations," with this important difference independence by the Irish Legislature two Parliaments was clearly implied therefore find Pitt turning his attention then chiefly agitated public opinion of Parliament and the fiscal relations to understand Pitt's handling of briefly to review the course of Affairs

The story of the dealings of England years 1688-1778 is one that it is efforts to dragoon the Catholic grind them into the lowest stratum hatred of which we are still reaping broods over the past; and his rule when Papists were excluded from possession of freehold estates, from the when they might not act as guarant more than £5; and when their Possessing £5 could take any horse that more may be read in the pages enactments of the Irish penal monstrous as to bring their own

than the members of the pocket boroughs of Britain could stand the Reform movement of 1830-32. The infiltration of novel principles into the Irish Legislature was slower and partial, inasmuch as that body misrepresented even more grossly the opinions of the mass of Irishmen.<sup>1</sup> It had long been swayed by a clique of politicians who were termed "Undertakers" because they undertook its manipulation, ostensibly in the interests of the British Government, but really in their own. The traditions of the past and the determination of the members of the Protestant Established Church to keep the Government in their own hands, formed a massive barrier against change. Yet the dissolving touch of the Time-Spirit and the shock of the war were at work upon that barrier; and when the war with the American colonies and France strained the resources of Britain and Ireland past endurance, it showed signs of giving way on two questions, the one religious, the other fiscal. In the year 1778, Catholics who took the oath of allegiance were allowed to become in effect owners of land, that is, they were permitted to hold land on lease for 999 years. Further, the odious restrictions formerly held out to sons of Catholics to abjure their religion were also abrogated. That year therefore seemed to mark the beginning of an epoch of toleration, which it was the desire of Pitt to crown with an act of justice too long delayed.

At present, however, we are concerned mainly with his attempt to reform the fiscal relations between the two islands. Until the year 1778 Irishmen were still in the state of economic vassalage to England which the Parliaments of William III had formally imposed. In some respects, especially in regard to the woollen industry, they were now worse off than in that time of humili-

Ireland to France, which the Government stopped.

The outbreak of war with the Americans, said, brought all these questions to a head. The British Government so far relaxed its policy as to allow Irish woollens to be exported, and the Irish troops serving away from home. At the same time Irish fishermen were allowed to fish in Newfoundland and other fisheries formerly excluded.

Nothing, however, was done for the Irish manufactures. The linen industry had been hampered by the British Government's policy of export of fine linens, and of sail-cloth, to the benefit of British manufacturers, the British bounties on the coarse linens exported from Ireland. In the year 1771 that industry had gained a great deal after it underwent a serious decline. The shrinkage of trade and the rise of Ireland. Lord North's Ministry was fain to propose the removal of the fiscal disabilities which sapped the life of the industry. It was to be allowed to send her products to the Continent to receive theirs directly in return; but, to the benefit of British manufacturers, the old restrictions on trade remained in force. Nothing, however, was done. At once loud complaints were heard from Plymouth, so that North gave up new trade. Ireland gained little or nothing from the war except that ships built in Ireland then

Romanists gave them increasing support. Religious antipathies were forgotten in the face of Ireland's urgent needs. The governing coterie at Dublin Castle failed either to check the movement or to revive the old schisms. It seemed that the intolerable burdens of the British fiscal system were about to mould the jarring elements of Irish society into the unity which marks a nation.

Though they failed to reach that far-off goal, they for the present won a noteworthy success. By combining to resist from the purchase of British goods they dealt a severe blow to the system thrust upon them. Nor did they abstain from the use of force. The Volunteers paraded the streets of Dublin with cannon bearing the motto, "Free Trade—or this." In face of an overwhelming opposition, the Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, advised the British Government to give way; and at the close of the year 1779, and early in 1780, a series of enactments was passed at Westminster withdrawing the prohibitions on the export of woollen goods and glass from Ireland. Commerce with the British colonies was now also provisionally thrown open to Irish merchants, and they were admitted to share in the Levant trade.

At the same time the cause of religious toleration gained an equally signal triumph. The strength of the Ulster Volunteers and the abatement of religious bigotry brought the Irish Parliament to pass a measure for relieving the Protestant Dissenters of that land from the sacramental test which had been looked upon as one of the bulwarks of the Established Church; and in the spring of 1780 the British Parliament gave its grudging assent to the measure.

the year 1783, the relations of the two cordial.

Causes of friction, however, remained, and probably would, still tell against the though the veto of the British Parliament had lapsed. The influence of the Chief Secretary on the Irish Ministry was distinctly British. It generally determine the votes of a majority in the Irish Parliament. Further, it was quite possible to ask questions the Irish Parliament would direct to the Government at Westminster. This seemed so in the early days of the Ministry. The beginning of the year 1783 was depressed by a very inclement winter; that her Parliament should "protect" the wool trade from English competition. The new Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Rutland, showed the reluctance of the more moderate party to a commercial war with England, sufficed to satisfy the Irish House of Commons, in 1783, passed an address to the King, emphasizing a liberal and well-digested plan for a liberal arrangement of intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, a friendly challenge which Pitt determined to meet. In the outset he made the Irish commercial policy his own. More than once in his correspondence with Rutland he describes it as the nearest to

No problem could have been more to the satisfaction of the Irish in a very restless state. Despite the war

to dissolve the Irish House of Commons. This demand was widely echoed. The Volunteers, having already through their delegates exerted on Parliament a pressure which was semi-national, refused either to let politics alone, or to disband. Ultimately their recklessness and the efforts of Grattan undermined their influence, and they gradually dwindled away; but, for the present, they seemed able to extort all their demands, prominent among which was that for the "protection" of Irish industries and products. In his first long communication to Pitt, the Duke of Rutland dwelt on the urgent need of investigating Irish claims, though he frankly declared that he could not understand a commercial question. Open-handed to ostentation, and devoted to the pleasures of the table, this affable young aristocrat occasionally showed signs of political foresight, as when he ventured to predict "that without *an union* Ireland will not be connected with Great Britain in twenty years longer."<sup>2</sup>

Far abler and more painstaking was his chief secretary, O'Connell, on whom was to fall the burden of work connected with the proposed Reform. The letters which passed between him and Pitt in the summer of 1784 show the care taken by both of them to master the facts of the situation. O'Connell (the future Lord Bolton) warned Pitt that a resolute effort would soon be made to effect the entire separation of the two Kingdoms, and urged him to "act towards Ireland with the utmost liberality consistent with your own safety: it must in the long run be the wisest policy." Above all he insisted, as the duke had also done, on the need of a firm decision, which even the malcontents might regard as final.<sup>3</sup>

Pitt on his side sought to procure the fullest information

commercial opportunities. Justice must then take her share of the imperia rested almost entirely with Great seek some means calculated to be manent tranquillity which the late failed to secure.<sup>1</sup>

In this letter, dated 19th September outline of the scheme which took Propositions, or Resolutions, of the instructive example of Pitt's method by collecting all the ascertainable facts from previous failures, and, by sifting them at general principles which would ill. In a word, his method was inductive ended with principles. Unlike the 93, who first enunciated principles the facts of life to them, he started reared on it a structure from whose take a wide survey. The Revolution grandly, but without foundations.

In order thoroughly to master the Ireland not only Orde but also Forchequer, and Beresford, Chief Commis were able and masterful men, the former the latter the staunchest champion Beresford did much to beautify Dublin Beresford Place. With these experienced conferences at Downing Street, or side of Putney Heath, which he re-

now warned the Duke of Rutland, who stoutly opposed Reform, not to confuse peaceable efforts in that direction with subversive or treasonable schemes; and in a notable phrase of his letter of 4th December, he declared that Parliamentary Reform must sooner or later be carried in both countries. As regards procedure, he thought it best to postpone a change in the Irish franchise until a similar measure came forward at Westminster for this, if successful, would impart to the movement in Ireland an irresistible force. In the meantime it would be well to take up the commercial problem.

Pitt's sanguine temperament here led him into a tactical mistake. The Irish Resolutions were destined to arouse in Great Britain a storm of opposition which swept away the hopes of Reform Associations; and the collapse of their efforts told unfavourably on the Irish political movement. Probably also he erred in bringing forward his proposals first in Dublin—a matter on which Fox readily aroused resentment at Westminster. Yet, where the issues were so tangled, it is difficult to say what success could have crowned Pitt's efforts had they been put forward in a different order. From his letter of 27th October 1784 to Lord Lieutenant we see that he looked on the Reform of Irish Parliament as simpler, but yet "perhaps more difficult and hazardous," than the commercial questions then at stake.

Here again he calculated wrongly. Ireland's demand for equality of trading advantages with Great Britain was certain to meet with vehement opposition from our manufacturers; the events of the year 1778 convincingly showed. His mistake is the more remarkable as he proposed "to give Ireland an unlimited communication of commercial advantage, if we



undertone of anxiety can be detected, to the Lord-Lieutenant on the 6th-7th January 1785. Writing until he had explained to the Lord-Lieutenant in great detail the views he had in view, namely, the sweeping away of all local judices, so that England and Ireland should be one country in effect, though for local concerns they should remain separate legislatures." The pupil of Adam Smith had no doubt of the truth that States which throw down the gauntlet become effectually parts of the same body. He knew that British manufacturers would probably be forced to change; and he pointed out to Rutland the necessity of Ireland to commercial equality, even in the free trade from British Colonies, to which, he felt, he was of right, involved a solemn duty to respond. He then pointed out that Ireland would be forced to equality; for Great Britain was burdened with the outcome of those duties; and Irish ships, under those burdens, might find it possible to export to the colonies to Great Britain to the detriment of the latter. In many ways he sought to disprove the arguments put forward by Irish patriots why they should not give little in return. He showed the impossibility of so much unless Ireland would irrevocably bind herself to tribute, according to her ability, to the crown.

The despatches sent by the Home Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant, and the letter which accompanied them, contained precise instructions on this last point, that Ireland's contribution should go to the support of the British Empire for a time he harboured the notion that

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The ten Propositions, or Resolutions, embodying Pitt, were brought before the Irish Parliament on 1785. They embodied the information gleaned from Foster, and Orde; and a report recently drawn up by a committee of the British Privy Council also for information. Modified in some particulars, and, with the addition of a Proposition soon to be noticed, they were adopted by the Dublin Parliament with little difficulty. In this form they may be summarized as follows. Foreign products were to pass between Great Britain and Ireland in either direction, without any increase of duty. The products of the sister islands were also to be imported or at identical rates; or again, where the duties were unequal, they were to be reduced to the lower of the two rates then in operation. All prohibitions on inter-insular trade were to lapse without renewal, unless it should seem expedient to re-impose of corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuits. The Government required that, when the "hereditary revenue" of Ireland reached a certain sum, Ireland should pay over the surplus to the British Government for the naval expenses of the Empire. As the "hereditary revenue" consisted mainly of custom and excise duties, which was generally steady, attended the prosperity of Ireland. Moreover that branch of the revenue had hitherto been under the general direction of the British Government, and Pitt's proposal to transfer its surplus to the Irish Parliament was both statesmanlike and conciliatory.

Nevertheless, the letters of the Duke of Rutland to the Government, and the conviction even of the best friends of Government, that the Propositions would fail if there was any delay in their

them while the two members supported the borough, opposed them. In all, he reckoned twelve hostile, twelve friendly, and the others indifferent. A list followed of the "expectations" of judgeships, pensions and sinecures.

As Rutland and Orde had foreseen, the measure fastened on the question of the cost of a country, whose annual expenditure at peace was by £150,000, and whose absentee landowners a million a year, pay a large sum to the Government. Ireland contribute largely in men and money, was not a great part of her administration. A Monarch and a Ministry in whose success she had no voice? Such were the invectives and restless of demagogues, Flood. Far from the conduct of Grattan. Equalling, nay, surpassing oratorical powers, he held them under the power of reason. As his energy and tact had gained him of legislative independence, so now he sought to improve relations with Great Britain, and therefore to the commercial proposals. The Irish Government out that Great Britain opened a far larger market; that the industries of the larger island, by war taxes and high wages, could be improved, whose national burdens were comparatively light. colonial trade was now to be opened up, not on terms that were revocable at the discretion of the Government, as was the case in 1780.

All these arguments were of no avail.

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which then stood at £652,000, should exceed £656,000 in time of peace, the surplus should go towards the support of the imperial navy in such a way as the Irish Parliament should direct. Additional taxes were then voted which were estimated to yield £140,000 a year.

No beginning could have been less auspicious. The arrangement was far less satisfactory than the worst of the alternative plans to which Pitt expressed the hope that O'Connell would resort. The contribution, on the present terms, could be evaded by any juggling Chancellor of the Exchequer who should contrive a series of small and profitable deficits. Consequently O'Connell came to London to persuade Pitt of the need of the change, but he found him inexorable. Pitt was resolved "not to proceed" unless the condition should be taken away from the last Resolution. This also appears in a part of his letter to the Marquis of Buckingham:

[*Secret.*]

Sunday, February 20, 1785

... I am able to tell you confidentially that we shall certainly *pend* the final approbation of the commercial system, and declare the impossibility of completing it till more satisfaction and explicit vision is made in Ireland respecting the object of contribution.

Yours ever,

W. Pitt

In opening his case at Westminster on 22nd February, O'Connell had to contend with the discouragement caused by this result and with a fit of hoarseness, which he informed Grenville he had been trying to sleep off without much success. Nevertheless he continued his speech, and the result was a complete success.

to complete a new system, and commerce the only principle on which they could proceed entirely and for ever to open to Ireland trade except that of India, which was a monopoly of the Company. There was no solid ground for a country as Ireland would become the market for goods, and would re-export them to our shores; was the suggestion that Ireland would be a market for British manufactures; for British energy had secured for Ireland a market in Ireland even against her imports. He referred guardedly to the subject of Ireland and the imperial navy. Finally, while deprecating the decision, he declared that what England lost she would more than recoup from the growth and prosperity of the sister island. He therefore supported the motion for the permanent and irrevocable opening to all the advantages of British commerce, and pledged herself to pay a sum towards the cost.

The Opposition, exasperated by Pitt's defence of Fox concerning the Westminster election, met with a furious fire of criticisms. Fox, who held strongly in favour of a "national commerce," that Ireland would probably smuggle into Great Britain goods of foreign colonies, and would become the market for the commercial interests of the Empire." He claimed, first to have been moved and secondly that he was probably right. If they were wrong, Britain would never have anything more to say. The Navigation Acts, the source of England's strength, would be a dead letter. As for Ireland's content

a still greater "revolution," the commercial treaty with France of 1786. The speeches of Fox and Eden did some good, but the attack on Pitt's measure convinced Irishmen that it had many excellences. The Earl of Mornington (later Marquis Wellesley) declared that Ireland would warmly support Pitt. Beresford also stated that the Irish members wanted an excuse for siding with him; but England must not press Ireland too hard in this bargain. A rebellion would seriously jeopardize the cause of order.<sup>1</sup>

No sense of prudence or responsibility restrained the British Opposition and their mercantile allies. A campaign had already begun. It bore signs of careful organization. The signal was given by the "Gazetteer" of 16th March, which pointed out that the Navigation Acts, the basis of Britain's prosperity, would be virtually annulled by the proposed measure. On the next day it showed that Irish competition on low wages, must ruin our industries. On 18th March a meeting of silk manufacturers protested against the measure. On the 24th the planters and merchants of the West followed suit. On that day the "Gazetteer" stated that the measure became law, the Exchange would be transferred from Cornhill to Cork; later on it declared that Arkwright and Dempster would set up their factories in Ireland. On 29th March the "Morning Chronicle," the organ of the middle class, joined in the hue and cry, declaring that even as it was the balance of trade between Great Britain and Ireland was in favour of the latter, and that the larger island must be drained of its wealth if the smaller if the old restrictions were not maintained.

Meetings of protest were now in full swing. Delegates from the West India merchants had an interview with Pitt and

from 13,243 weavers of Glasgow and artisans were as much alarmed as the rest. They stated their conviction that if the R. they would be undersold by the Irish and reduced to beggary.<sup>1</sup> This solidarity was worthy. In those days the "manufacturer" was in name, the weaver; and tens of thousands where the hand-loom kept the wolf from the door. In winter, saw pale Ruin stalking behind resourceful, energetic Paddy. The age was passing through all classes with a unanimity not possible now, when the term "manufacturer" meant a capitalist who owns a factory where he employs others. Then the solidarity of interest between the classes was obvious. In imagination both classes were wafted by a cruel east wind to a land they disliked and despised.

Some of the petitions were based on the petition of the Glasgow cotton workers complaining that if the Irish Parliament would lower duties on British cottons.<sup>2</sup> But Pitt had through his mind the principle that must be an equalizing of duties on both sides, the lower level being always taken. It was in vain. The protectionist spirit was too strong. Thus, the committee of the merchants of Sheffield declared that their industry would suffer without grave injury if the present duties on cotton were lowered into Great Britain, namely, 56 shillings per ton, the level then obtaining in Ireland, that

then "effectually prevent our exporting the former to the kingdom and also to foreign markets, and enable them to send the latter into Great Britain at a less price than it can be manufactured here under the burthen of the high duties, the high price of labour, and heavy taxes, which would inevitably tend to the ruin of that valuable branch of trade in the kingdom." The Bristol sugar-refiners can scarcely have read Pitt's proposals, which implied equal duties on all articles British and Irish ports; and the Irish Parliament had agreed this. The notion that Irish sugar-refiners, by complex duties of their own devising, would soon beat their British rivals out of foreign markets and ruin them in the home market, is a sign of the mad folly of the time. Against stupidity such as this even the gods fight in vain.

By no arguments could the hubbub be appeased. Pamphlets—especially one by Lord Sheffield, denounced the doom awaiting England should Pitt's Resolutions pass. In a short time sixty-four petitions poured in against them; and the manufacture of Great Britain, under the chairmanship of Wedgwood, formed a "Great Chamber" in order to stave off the catastrophe. Yet Pitt's energies and spirits seemed to rise with the rising opposition. In order to emphasize the importance of commerce, he had recently appointed a Committee of Council for Commerce, which promised to answer the purposes which that ornamental body the Board of Trade, abolished in 1782, had signally failed to fulfil. The new Council was charged to examine manufactures and others as to the relations of Anglo-Irish commerce and the probable effect of the Resolutions. Similar investigations were made at the bar of the House of Commons. Pitt cherished his

house from these inquiries. "The more the subject is discussed



we shall ultimately gain—at least the  
enough.”<sup>1</sup>

The report of the committee is very  
difficulty of obtaining trustworthy statis  
topics. The Irish accounts showed a f  
to Great Britain than of imports fro  
on the contrary, the British Custom  
balance of trade as largely against  
could discover no means of accountin  
discrepancy.<sup>2</sup> Thus, while protectioni  
Irish Sea were croaking over the decli  
growth of that of their rival, the offi  
(as they would have phrased it) the  
largely in their favour as to warrant  
exhaustion of that rival.

In matters which were within the ke  
age, the report was reassuring. The  
Norwich declared that, though the wa  
less by one-half than those of English  
tion was not to be feared under the  
Everett, a London merchant, maintain  
facturers, owing to their skill, taste, and  
have a superiority over those of Irela  
sheep and wool were not exported thi  
facturers of Yorkshire were decided  
chief clothier of Devizes expected har  
only in the cheaper stuffs.<sup>3</sup> For the co  
was less encouraging, the witnesses t  
that Irish thread could be spun 20 per  
thread, and that an import duty of 10  
protect the home market.<sup>4</sup> Represen  
London and Scotland had little app  
until the Irish workers developed skill  
trade, the evidence of eight iron-ma

of bar iron, they asserted that they could hold their own against her small and struggling iron industry.<sup>1</sup>

In face of the alarmist statements of Wedgwood in public evidence before the committee is of some interest. When asked whether he feared Irish competition in pottery if the duties in both kingdoms were equalized, he replied that "there might be danger of a competition in time, in their own and every foreign market."<sup>2</sup> I should think we were safer if earthenware was allowed to be imported free of all duties into both countries." This was the man who headed the protectionist "Great Chamber of Manufacturers." Wedgwood's chief manager admitted that he had only the day before heard that any pottery at all was made in Ireland. Is it surprising that Pitt sharply criticized Wedgwood's tactics?

Other strange features of this report are, first, that the opposition in England against any relaxation of duties was greatest in the case of the very articles, calicoes and sugar, in which the British Parliament had recently imposed higher duties; secondly, that whereas much of the evidence told in favour of inter-kingdom Free Trade, the committee decided in favour of a system of moderate duties to be agreed on by the two Governments. Some such conclusion was perhaps inevitable in view of the popular clamour; but the committee made no suggestion to the two Parliaments, now drifting into fiscal hostility, to come to terms.

If the evidence contained in the report had been duly weighed, the scare among British traders must have passed away. Official reports are of little avail to thwart the efforts of protection mongers. In vain did George Rose, in an unsigned pamphlet, point the moral of the case and appeal to the common sense

be the true explanation of his disposal of his letter of 21st May, to the Duke of Devonshire, of the difficulties arising from the unscrupulousness of his supporters, and the very marked independence of his supporters, so that "we are hardly susceptible of the impression they may receive."

This avowal is of some interest. In Pitt's position in the spring of 1785. In the former chapter, he had strained the following by taking up too many thorny composite elements—Foxites, Northites, and others—not yet been fused into unity by the powerful threatening pressure of France. On the one hand, he could not keep his supporters from the country from the turmoil which a Foxite caused. There was the danger, and he clung to office, not merely from love of power, but because, in the proud words of the time, that he could guide his country aright, and

Viewing the question of the independence of the House of Commons in a more general way, we may say that in the days of pocket boroughs, members probably acted more independently than at present time, when their action is apt to be controlled by external forces, pressure from constituents, and the party "whip." However we may view it, it is certain that Pitt, despite his huge map of important proposals in 1785-6, and his important Propositions he hesitated and lost the

ments respecting colonial commerce, should be equally binding on both kingdoms. Respecting the reduction of duties in either country, it was suggested that they should not be below 10½ per cent.; also that no new duties should be imposed except such as would "balance duties on internal consumption." He also added a Proposition concerning the copyright of books. Respecting Ireland's contribution to the navy, Pitt annulled an Irish proposal asserting the prior need of balancing income and expenditure, and required that the proposed financial arrangement should be perpetual.

In his speeches of 12th May and succeeding days he showed that most of the petitions against his plan were founded on error, and he refuted the hackneyed assertion that, because Ireland was lightly taxed and wages were low, she would be able to undersell Britons in their own markets. Considering her extreme poverty, he said, her burdens were in effect as great as those of England; her backwardness in industry would long cripple her; moreover, for skilled labour she had to pay as dearly as England's employers. He claimed that a liberal scheme of commercial union would benefit both islands, just as the Union with Scotland had immensely furthered the prosperity of Great Britain, despite the prophecies of ruin with which it was at the time received.

His opponents now changed their tactics. Seeing that their Propositions had been altered largely in deference to their wishes, they could scarcely meet them with a direct attack, and therefore sought to procure their rejection, if not at Westminster then at Dublin. Congratulating themselves on having effected the abandonment of the first proposals as fraught with

not," he exclaimed, "barter English coin for that is not the price I would pay, nor is it a purchase." Finally he declared that the House understood these matters so well as the trade of Britain, who had overwhelmingly declared against Fox, did well to disclaim any positive opinion for he took no interest in them, and he had read Adam Smith's work, which he said was full of entertaining theories.<sup>1</sup> We can now see the irony in declaiming against the new safeguards which he himself had demanded; and we can see the touches in which he reprobated Pitt's conduct and his novel connection with the "King's Bank." Formerly War Secretary under Lord North, he had been appointed by Pitt head of the new Board of Trade for the Superintendence of Commerce. He had approved Pitt's proposals (except the one which he hotly inveighed against), made a "Coalition," calling Jenkinson Pitt's partner, and declaring that he envied not the statue if it were given to its statue.<sup>2</sup> Other members, including Burke, played with the simile, and thus began a series of otherwise exhausting debates, which, wearying the speaker, rendered him powerless to persevere in the midst of his efforts.

The most brilliant, though not the last, of these debates was that of Richard B. Sheridan, needless to dilate on the Celtic charm and the

his satire too caustic, to ensure success except as a *frondeur*. Friendship with Fox condemned him almost entirely to the *role* and exaggerated the recklessness of his utterances. He was the Charles O'Malley of politics. When, therefore, that engaging political satire, "The Rolliad," appeared, in castigation of Rolli, the somewhat rolisterous member for Devonshire, everyone attributed the poems to Sheridan; and his strenuous denial found little credence.<sup>1</sup>

One of the "Probationary Odes" amusingly hit off the alliance of Jenkinson with Pitt and the increase in the number of the Irish Propositions:

Lo! hand in hand advance th' enamour'd pair  
 Thus Chatham's son and that the drudge of Hate,  
 Proud of their mutual love  
 Like Nisus and Euryalus they move  
 To Glory's steepest heights together tend,  
 Each careless for himself, each anxious for his friend.

CHORUS.

Hail! most prudent Politicians!  
 Hail! correct Arithmeticians!  
 Hail! vast exhaustless source of Irish Propositions!

Elsewhere in dolorous strains the Muse

Decries far Ierne rose from England's flame,  
 And build on British ruin Irish fame.

In these witticisms we have the high water mark of the achievements of the Opposition. Sheridan inveighed against the exaction of a contribution from Ireland towards the navy and the re-imposition of the Navigation Laws (certainly

liament that the independence of Ireland it was not by Parliament that it should tantamount to an invitation to the Irish their coercion of the Dublin Parliament that Fox and his friends, in despair of doing Westminster, were seeking to wreck the at the cost of civil broils.

In this they succeeded. By substance carried the Irish Propositions at the end passed them on 18th July. But long centre had moved across St. George's Church length and breadth of Ireland an outer state of ignominious dependence in was placed by the contribution now imposed return for greatly diminished advantage about the bartering of Irish liberty again on every lip. The results were at once with his usually sanguine forecast, had the Dublin Parliament would be more in Westminister, it set at naught all the V. Some of its members even taunted Pitt towards Ireland throughout. Grattan, who taunt, opposed the new scheme, especially perpetual contribution, in a speech which described to Pitt as "seditious and in scarcely credible." Flood excelled him in that body of usually subservient parliament in the Bill was granted only by a majority (August)

The excitement soon abated; and it must be allowed that the popular party in Ireland did not adopt the hostile measures against British trade which might have been expected after the breakdown of these enlightened proposals. Lord Westmorland, during his viceroyalty five years later, admitted that complete harmony existed in the commercial relations of the two kingdoms.

This may have salved the wound which the events of 1785 dealt to Pitt. Up to the very end he had hoped for success, what had been the dearest object of his life. After hearing the ominous vote of 12th August in Dublin, he wrote to the Marquis of Buckingham in the following manly terms:

Putney Heath, Aug. 12, 1785.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have many thanks to return you for your letter. Grenville will probably send you the account we received to-day from Ireland, after a long period of suspense. The motion for bringing in a Bill has been carried only by 127 against 108; and such a victory undoubtedly takes, for the present at least, of the nature of a defeat. A motion was announced for Monday last, declaratory against the 4th Resolution. The event of this motion seemed to be thought uncertain. The possible issue of all this seems to be that the settlement is put at some distance, but I still believe the principles of it too sound, not to triumph in their way at last.

To the Duke of Rutland he also wrote in the same lofty spirit, using the words quoted at the head of this chapter, and adding that, when experience had brought more wisdom, "we shall see all our views realised in both countries and for the advantage of both."



poison Pitt's mind against Orde as the chief culprit in Dublin. As for Beresford, he believed his colleagues had turned traitors. Lesser men sought corners to find petty causes for that behaviour, but no such suspicions mar the dignity of Pitt's correspondence, a perusal of which enabled one to understand why Orde once exclaimed: "I am sure of the just and noble part which Mr. Pitt has acted, and of the success in the cause of his support."<sup>1</sup>

The real reason of failure, as Pitt clearly saw, was the domination of powerful factions in both Houses. His proposals by representing each concession to the island as an injury or an insult, or both, were calculated to fan to a flame the fears and jealousies which he sought to allay them; and in that age the susceptibilities of the English and Irishmen were highly inflammable. The reforms by reformatory efforts and closer intercourse with the feelings then so easily aroused; and as well as the offer of conciliation, not yet crowned with success, was no figure nobler and more pathetic than that of the man who struggled hard to bring together the two Houses by the ties of interest and friendship, while the more sinister than those of his political opponents in the ministry who set themselves doggedly to oppose his efforts by means of slander and misre-

<sup>1</sup> Ashbourne, 146.

## CHAPTER XII

### PITT AND HIS FRIENDS

(1783-94)

Keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key.

SHAKESPEARE, *All's Well that Ends Well*.

A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and to but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love. —BACON.

SOME statesmen merit notice solely from the magnitude of their achievements; others attract attention by the charm of their personality. Pitt claims homage on both accounts. Accordingly I propose to devote this chapter to his private life and friendships during the early part of his career, beginning with the time when he laid down the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and fled to the house of his friend Wilberforce at Wimbledon. In the Diary of the latter we read this brief but suggestive entry: "April 3 [1783]. To Wimbledon, where Pitt, etc., dined and slept. Evening walk—to bed a little past two. April 14 Pitt came to dine at the house of Mr. Wilberforce at Wimbledon."

Steele, and Wilberforce there broke loose at Westminster, and indulged in *foyning*, denoting thrusting or fencing, conjures pranks such as Horace loved. Would time for these wholesome follies!

Imagine these youths, with the fresh breeze upon them, cheating the hours with the austere leader of the House of Commons in the precincts, fixed his eyes straight on his opponent, loftily in air during his State progress, as much as a nod to his supporters? yea, at Lauriston House, is all fun and laughter against the edge of Wilberforce's fancy, a quotation with quotation, in a fresh culture. As yet all is joyous in the life; Wilberforce has inherited from an uncle an air of Lauriston House, and adds room to room to the friends who always cluster about him; slaves have not yet struck a chill to his life; a buzz of friends and admirers. He reminds one of Disraeli's "Lothair," who proved a party to every party—no one quite knew why, but he was next him. The magnetism of Wilberforce lay in his lovable and gifted nature, visible in genial anecdote, friendly parody, sparkling conversation.

For Pitt, too, there were as yet no clouds on that time, there loomed before him the specter of the impecunious barrister, but that did not mar his self-reliant nature. Doubtless the true

seniors. Here, among youths and friends, his pranks were startling. One of them must be told in the words of Wilberforce: "We found one morning the fruits of Pitt's earlier rising in the careful sowing of the garden beds with the fragments of a dress-hat in which Dudley Ryder had overnight come down from the opera."

Would that we knew more of those bright days! For Pitt the man, not Pitt the statesman, is seen at Wimbledon. The pillar of State, columnar in its Doric austerity, becomes a little faun form, twined about with social graces, gay with the flowers of friendship. The hours of recreation, rather than those spent in the office, reveal the inner life. Alas! the self-revealing episodes in the life of Pitt are hidden from us. None of his friends was a Boswell. Wilberforce, who might have been the enlightened, was troubled by defective eyesight, which curtailed his correspondence; and his Diary is a series of tantalizing jottings, a veritable Barmecide feast. As for Pitt's relatives, they never drew him out of himself. Lord Chatham, though a good talker in general company, seems to have exerted on his young brother a slightly chilling influence; and their letters were fraternally business-like. We therefore search in vain for the lighter traits of character, those sparkles of wit, which enlivened the joyous years 1781-5. This side of Pitt's character is little more known to us than are the hidden regions of the moon. We wish to know it all the more because it is not the frozen but the sunny side of his being.

Failing to catch more than one sportive echo of those glances, the chronicler falls back on mere externals, such as Pitt's occasional reluctance to attend the parish church at Wimbledon.

day 1798. There, too, he breathed his last, in 1806. In the dark days that followed on the news his thoughts turned with one final flicker of hope to the news which he expected from his special envoy, the Earl of Harrowby, formerly Dudley Ryder. The news was to be heart-breaking. But fancy persists in wondering perchance, during the time of waiting, the dawn might not for a brief space fling off the thralldom of the past and flit across the open to dwell with fond remembrance on the spring sowing of the flower-beds of his friend W

After the severe disappointments of the years 1793-1801, signs of friskiness vanish from the life of Pitt. His optimism, his hopefulness is of almost boyish intensity. His confidence in himself, and in the goodness of his cause, and in the power to carry out a work of national revival, lead him to undertake great enterprises in a way that astonishes his opponents. The nation having given him a mandate, he hopes to solve the most urgent of existing problems: the restoration of public credit, the reduction of the National Debt, the reform of Parliament, the subordination of the India Company to the control of Parliament, the opening of freer trade not only with Ireland but also with the Continent, the preservation of peace, so that, as he phrased it, "we may continue for five years, and we shall again look at the world in the face."<sup>1</sup>

Here was a programme which transcended anything previously seen. But to it were added the many new interests and problems that provide a full stock in trade

first years of power that needs apology. This is the persi- with which he pressed against Fox the demand for a con- scrutiny of the Westminster election. Despite the fact that wearisome and very expensive inquiry brought to light fe votes, and did not exclude Fox from Parliament (for as w he sat as Member for Orkney), the Prime Minister refus put an end to "this cursed business," as Pulteney term until his own supporters compelled him to desist. How : to explain this conduct? It led to waste of time and tem Parliament, besides annoying many of his friends, and str to breaking-point the allegiance of his composite ma There can be no doubt that he committed a blunder, an which Englishmen detest; for his conduct seemed ungener a beaten foe and a violation of the unwritten rules of fair-

Nevertheless, it is likely that he acted, not from rancor from a desire to ban his enemy, least of all under any dic from Windsor (of this I have found no sign), but rather fro dletates of political morality. That there had been trumpi of false votes was notorious; for the votes polled exceeded total number of voters; and Pitt, as the champion of pu elections, may have deemed it his duty to probe the sore bottom. In these days an avowed champion of Reform be praised for such conduct. In that age he was conde and it was certainly tactless to single out Fox from amon many candidates for whom corrupt practices had been Such an act appeared the outcome of personal pique, not c for electoral purity. So at least men looked on it in the of 1785. Pulteney, Wraxall, and the ordinary ruck of me failed to see anything but personal motives in the whole.

It avoided all reference to the issue at stake, and it appealed with the instincts of squires. Little wonder that over to the side which seemed to favour man in his contest with a spirit. Later Pitt could muster only a majority (1785), and this clearly foreshadowed which came with a vote hostile to the Government. A subordinate motion, six days later, turned to their allegiance, thus showing "they wished to control and reorganize the Administration."<sup>1</sup>

This affair deserves mention because it shows the chief weakness of Pitt. His friends, apart from other youths, even his own general company, and his decided lack of a few friends, gave him very few advisers. He therefore was slow to move in the House, and he never gained the touch. Well would it have been if he had more with men and shown to them the affability with which Fox and Burke were alike. But, like Peel, Pitt had no small talk for the lobby. In truth he was too unbend with ease. Or rather he was too friendly to his friends or among his juniors. At surprising lengths, witness that when Stanhope, two of her younger friends, Napier (the future historian) came to blacken his face. In the midst of it came a knock at the door. To the surprise of his desirous of taking his command, the minutes State business stood still. He brushed off his assailants and washed his face. The boys marvelled more at his calm than his colour. The Prime Minister told them the story of the night.

His rather stilted manners at Westminster were doubtless a reflection—a lunar reflection—of the melodramatic splendour of his father. Never was a colleague or a subordinate introduced until the effects of light were Rembrandtesque, and the telling phrase had been coined. But when his father triumphed by the force of his personality, the son on his half succeeded. For he was more a Grenville than a Pitt, and he inherited from that family some of its congenital splendour. Hence the efforts which the son put forth, as if with the object of fulfilling the precept of St. Paul to Timothy—"Let not the youth despise thy youth"—were calculated, not to impress but to freeze them.

Far different was the easy good nature of Fox, which often salvaged the wounds inflicted in the course of debate. It was in that Lord North, after one of the debates on the American war, in which Fox had mercilessly belaboured one of the Ministers, that a good-humouredly remarked to the orator, "You were a feather to-night, Charles; I am glad that it was not my head that you have fallen upon." Fox, we may add, reciprocated these compliments. However he might threaten North with impeachment, he was ready in private to shake him by the hand. Shortly before the fall of that Minister he publicly asked for pardon for offending him by his tremendous indictment, and that he meant it not. To us this sounds unreal. Either the indictment against the author of the nation's ruin was not sincere, or the apology was hollow. Pitt, with his exceptionally high standard of truthfulness,<sup>1</sup> could not have tendered such an apology; and Wraxall praised his conduct, adding that Pitt was placable, and was wanting in those frank, winning, open



and the lofty principles of Pitt, mere would have been Esau, provided that he had the customs of primogeniture.

We have little or nothing that directly produced on Pitt by his discovery of the selfishness of his supporters. Perhaps it intensified the stammer and awkwardness of manner, which Wilberforce described as "very great. Certainly he did not mix more with his equals. "Not make friends" is a significant entry for March 1785.<sup>1</sup> This inability to make friends was not incompatible with those rarer qualities which drew him closely to those with whom he had real kinship. One may read Shakespeare's thoughts into the speech of Polonius to Laertes, the poet supremely fitted to inspire the few with ardent affection at arm's length. In regard to character, there was nothing for the very characteristic which to men of letters was a blemish.

Nevertheless, it was a serious failing in a statesman and tactician. Onlookers, who saw only the exterior, described Pitt as the embodiment of coldness. His friends knew full well that he was not cold. Dundas and Wilberforce testify to his affability, his equanimity, his fund of good temper, which was not a contradiction and the advent of bad news was no case in point. Pitt had long been ruminating on the proposal, and at length mentioned it to his friends only to learn that there would be grave objections to the scheme; far from showing annoyance, he met the opposition "with the most unruffled good-humour."

the slave-trade, remarked: "One felt almost to like or again Lady Anne Hamilton in her "Memoirs of George III," asserted that Pitt was always cold and frostiness even into his carouses.

This certainly was the general belief. In one particular behaviour often gave colour to the charge of pride. His letters were as stiff as his parliamentary attitude. All, he very often left letters unanswered; and this merely to begging letters, against which silence was the Minister's panoply, but even to important matters. We find Eden, in the midst of the commercial war with France, writing from Paris in despairing terms of the Prime Minister's silence, and finally suggesting that letters of the last fortnight must have sunk in the Channel. James Harris, too, when fighting an unequal battle against a French party in Holland, begged Pitt to send a word to encourage the hard pressed friends of England. For not a line came; and at last Harris begged Carmarthen for a letter out of his chief. "Is it impossible to me to *speak* so well, to write one poor line to these sea and peace men?" The excuse doubtless was, that he was overworked in Parliament (as indeed he stated to be the case) even with the then scanty facilities for dealing with correspondence, he should certainly have handled it with more method and tact. Careless correspondents will conjecture how much a Prime Minister may harm himself by subjecting friends and foes alike to a peculiar slight.

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as Wraxall avers, hold the first place in the country; and as it was still held by Wilberforce; and to this may be applied the apt remark of Montaigne, "where the mind possesses and sways the soul cannot be overcome." For reasons Pitt after the year 1784 came into contact with subalterns, among whom Dundas and Gordon were prominent.

Henry Dundas (1742-1811), a young man of great talent, Honourable Robert Dundas, Lord President of the Court of Session, and of Anne Gordon, daughter of the Duke of Gordon, born at Edinburgh, where he was educated at the University. The atmosphere in which he grew up was strictly legal; and his ancestry, no less than his education, seemed to fit him for success at the Bar. He was called in 1763. His rise was rapid, and in 1774 he was elected as member for Midlothian. At Westminster he joined North's party and became known as a powerful debater. United as these powers were with his natural genial gifts, and the full fund of Scottish Scotch law in favour and became Lord Advocate. Great as his powers of speech he lacked; a harsh voice, a stammer, and awkward gestures told against him; but he rose triumphant, thanks to indomitable courage. He was to him unabashed to bear the heaviest blows. When once he expressed his admiration of Blücher, he was badly beaten, "the old devil" called him a traitor, nothing had happened. So it was with his encounters with Fox. He might be reproached with being a traitor. His features were bold and handsome, and his eyes were "with convivial purple," that perhaps enhanced his popularity. The House loved a *bon vivant*, who enjoyed

my best Burgundy and blasphemy to put him in humour. After a brace of bottles ventured to drop business. Thurlow cursed me, and asked Pitt for a glass. Pitt looked foolish, Grenville wise. Mulgrave stared, and his chin lengthened. Tried the effect of another bottle. Then I made a long speech on the subject of our meeting. "Sydney by the fire" and so on.

In one respect Dundas was the great political agent of the age. He managed Scotland, so thoroughly, indeed, that he has been termed "the foremost Scotsman of the eighteenth century." No civilian since the time of John Knox has ever concentrated the energies of that people so thoroughly as Henry Dundas. The great Reformer achieved by an appeal to the popular aspirations, the party manipulator achieved by an appeal to the passions. Since the collapse of the Stuart cause material interests had been paramount; and their deadening effect on the national character appears in the political torpor which lay on Scotland until the strident call of the French Revolution awoke her. The men north of the Tweed had even more reason than the Englishmen to desire Parliamentary Reform, for, as we see in a later chapter, in all Scotland there were only 17 members, and these returned 45 members as against 44 who might have been returned from Cornwall. But so long as the Scots slumbered, it mattered not whether they had 45 members or 44, for the return of the members and their course of conduct at Westminster were alike controlled by Dundas. The soporific fruit which drugged the Scots and kept their representatives close to his heel was "the Scotch Whisky." Dundas it was who dispensed all important prizes both to the Church and State. Valuable livings at home, lucrative posts

restoring the estates that were confiscated. By this act of clemency Pitt and Dundas did the work of reconciliation so tactfully and helped to foster the sentiment of Brackenridge. Dundas bore a rich harvest on the fields of Salam. It is not surprising, then, that Dundas had a clique in Scotland entirely at his beck and call. Five henchmen at Westminster, Ferguson stated that he had never heard a speech, w vote, and that there was only one defect, namely, that he was not quite tall enough to readily to see into which lobby he was going.

Even so, the magnetic influence of Dundas. The Caledonian squad was a political asset of Dundas. Seldom could the laird of Melville decide by throwing his forty-five votes into the scale. Dundas himself was fully aware of his importance. When he wrote to Grenville early in 1789, he did so post because in his present position (of Dundas) cement of political strength to the present. The dissolution of which might be ruinous. Dundas was not only with the Scottish canniness, but with the English. In truth, the staunchness of Dundas's friends was to refute those critics, both of his own and of Pitt. To speak of him as of a political Vicar of Braemar. His trimming propensities were often disagreed. In the speech in which he hailed the rising of the waning orb of North, was quite characteristic of half of his career.<sup>2</sup> But, for him as for some of Pitt's genius, and the glow of his pure

influence over Pitt steadily increased, while that of Wilberforce somewhat waned; and we find the latter declaring at a certain time that Pitt's connection with Dundas was his "great fortune," a remark which applied mainly to the slavery question. It is, however, still more applicable to Dundas's conduct in the war, when, as we shall see, his absorption in other work, and his utter inexperience of military affairs, should have made him backward in giving advice. Far from that, he was for some time the guiding spirit; and from his seat at the Home Office, the India Board, or from his suburban villa, he dashed off orders of momentous import, which were to gladden the heart of Clive.

Such, then, was the man at whose house, on the west side of Wimbledon Common, Pitt was a frequent visitor. The conviviality was unrestrained by those scruples which more than ever prevailed at Wilberforce's abode hard by; and after the latter gave up that villa, in the autumn of 1786, the associations of Pitt with Wimbledon are somewhat vinous. Both Pitt and Dundas were hard drinkers. The former frequently tossed down several tumblers of port wine before a great speech in the House of Commons; and it would seem, if rumour spoke true, that at Dundas's the potations were long and deep. It might be supposed, however, that Pitt performed no serious work after dinner. The long and important despatches which he wrote at Wimbledon show the contrary, and their contents prove them to have been written before the Bacchic pleasures, which men of that generation deemed the appropriate close of a busy day. Only once did the pleasures of dessert at Dundas's cause Pitt and his host to promise themselves in public. But on one occasion they went to the House of Commons obviously the worse for liquor.

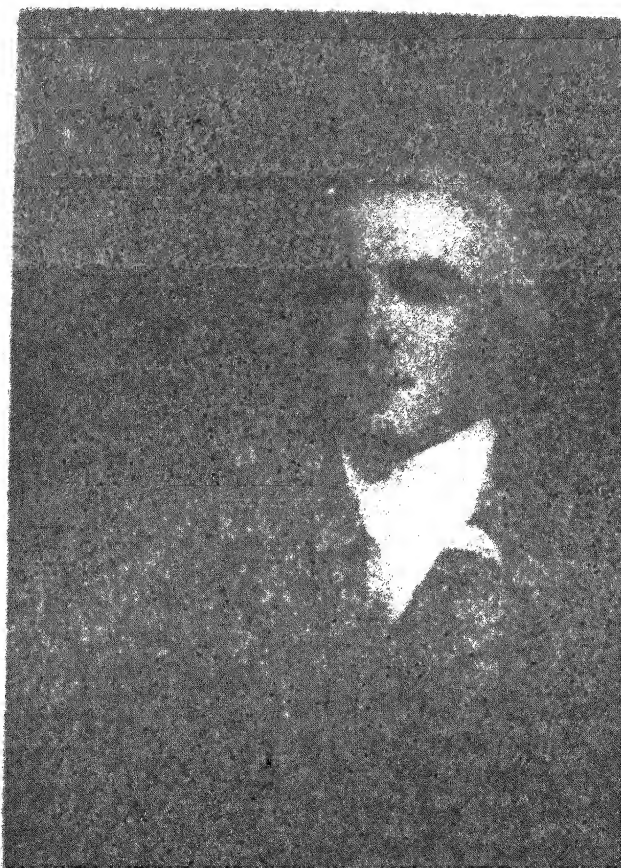


A man so frank and intriguing, so subtle Dundas, is fair game for the satirist; and that the Whig rhymsters who compiled the the factotum of Caledonia:

Whose exalted soul  
No bonds of vulgar prejudice constrain  
Of shame unconscious in his bold  
He spurns that honour which the  
For, true to public Virtue's patriot  
He loves the *Minister* and not the  
Alike the advocate of North and  
The friend of Shelburne and the  
His ready tongue with sophistries  
Can say, unsay, and be consistent

This is, of course, the effusion of unskill but it shows the skill with which the enemy on the weak points in his career. As a man have worked harder than the future Viscount few men has fortune at the close pressed

William Wyndham Grenville (1759-1834) man than Dundas. First cousin to Pitt, in 1793 year, he seemed destined to advance hands as his father had signally helped Chatham in that meteoric career. Nature, however, intended the Grenvilles, both father and son, not planets, but rather satellites. The tradition of the Grenvilles (in which Pitt was by no means an exception) William Grenville, blended with a freezing cold which was enhanced by his heavy features. To counterbalance these defects, he was de-





Commons in 1789, after the death of Cornwall. In this honourable post he was soon transferred to more important duties, as Secretary of State, and entered the Upper House as Lord Grenville. In 1791 he became Secretary for Foreign Affairs, his conduct of which will engage our attention. Here we may note that in all his undertakings he gained a reputation for soundness; and if the neutral tints of his character procured for him neither the enthusiastic love of friends nor the hatred of foes, he won the respect of all. The envoy who penned the "Rolliad" could fasten on nothing but his solidity—

A youth who boasts no common share of head.  
What plenteous stores of knowledge may contain  
The spacious tenement of Grenville's brain!  
Nature, in all her dispensations wise,  
Who formed his head-piece of so vast a size,  
Hath not, 'tis true, neglected to bestow  
Its due proportion to the part below.

Unfortunately, though Grenville could manage business, he could not manage men; and at this point he failed to show good a defect in the political panoply of Pitt. On neither side had nature bestowed the social tact which smoothed the rubs of diplomatic discussion, say, in the case of the French envoy, Chauvelin, in 1792. That fervid young man, Hyde de Neuville, complained bitterly of the freezing atmosphere of Downing Street. The enthusiastic young Canning found it impossible to work with Grenville, who was also on strained terms with Dundas. The "inner Cabinet," composed of Pitt and Dundas, must have been the scene of many triangular negotiations; it needed all the mental and moral superiority of Pitt (of which every one bears witness) to preserve even the appearance of harmony between seconds who were alike opinionated

to mourn the lack of information about those smaller details which light up traits of character. Few of Pitt's letters refer to his private affairs in the years 1784-86; and the knowledge which we have of them is largely inferential. Even the secondary sources fared badly; for it seems that Pitt's housemaid made a holocaust of the many letters which Wilberforce wrote to him during his foreign tour in 1785.<sup>1</sup> In the Pitt Papers there is only one letter of Wilberforce of this period; and as it throws light on their friendship and the anxiety felt by Pitt's friends at the time of the Irish Propositions, I print it here almost *in extenso*.<sup>2</sup>

Lausanne, and Aug., 1785.

MY DEAR PITT,

... If I were to suffer myself to think on politics, I should be very unhappy at the accounts I hear from all quarters: nothing has come from any great authority; but all the reports, such as they are, are of one tendency. I repose myself with confidence on you, being sure that you have spirit enough not to be deterred by difficulties if you can carry your point thro'; and trusting that you will have that greater degree of spirit which is requisite to make a person give up at once when the bad consequences which would follow his going on are at a distance. Yet I cannot help being extremely anxious, your own character, as well as the welfare of the country are at stake; but we may congratulate ourselves that they are here inseparably connected. In the opinion of unprejudiced men I do not think you will suffer from adjourning the Irish propositions *ad calendas Græcorum*, if the state of Ireland makes it dangerous to proceed and you can make it evident you had good reason to bring them on, which I think you can. At the worst, the consequences on this side are only that you suffer (the Country may suffer too, but I am taking for granted this is the lesser evil); but I tremble and look forward to what may happen if the Irish Parliament should pass the propositions, and the Irish nation refuse to accept them; nor would it be one struggle only, but as often as any Bill should come over from our House of Commons to be passed in theirs, which was obnoxious, there would be a fresh opportunity for reviving it, especially as you have an Opposition to deal with as unprincipled and mischievous as ever embroiled the affairs of any country. God bless you, my dear Pitt and carry you thro' all your difficulties! You may reckon yourself most fortunate in that cheerfulness of mind which enables you every now and then to throw off your load for a few hours and rest yourself. I fancy it must have been this which, when I

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Wilberforce," i, 78.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 189.

am with you, prevents my considering you as an object of compassion, tho' Prime Minister of England; for now, when I am at a distance, out of hearing of your toynng, and your (illegible) other proofs of a light heart, I cannot help representing you to myself as oppressed with cares and troubles, and what I feel for you is more, I believe, than even Pepper feels in the moments of his greatest anxiety; and what can I say more? . . .

Pepper Arden, to whom Willerforce here refers, scarcely lived up to his name. His character and his countenance alike lacked distinction. The latter suffered from the want of a nose, or at least, of an effectively imposing feature. What must this have meant in a generation which remembered the effect produced by Chatham's "terrifying beak," and was dominated by the long and concave curve on which Pitt suspended the House of Commons! Further, Pepper lacked dignity. His manner was noisy and inelegant.<sup>1</sup> He pushed himself forward as a Cambridge friend of Pitt; and the House resented the painful efforts of this flippant young man to run in harness by the side of the genius. Members roared with laughter when Arden marched in, at Christmastide of 1783, to announce that Pitt, as Prime Minister of the Crown, would offer himself for re-election. The effrontery of the statement was heightened by the voice and bearing of the speaker. Nevertheless, Pitt, as we have seen, made him Attorney-General. No appointment called forth more criticism. He entered the peerage as Lord Alvanley.

It is the characteristic of genius to attract and inspire the young; and Pitt's influence on them was second only to that of Chatham. As we shall see later on, Canning caught the first glow of political enthusiasm from the kindling gaze of the young Prime Minister. Patriotism so fervid, probity so spotless, eloquence so moving fired cooler natures than Canning's; and among the most noteworthy of those who now came forward was Henry Addington. His father, Anthony Addington, had started life as a medical man in Reading, and afterwards in Bedford Row, London, where Henry was born in 1754. In days when that profession held a lower place than at present, this fact was to be thrown in the teeth of the son on becoming Prime Minister. Chatham, however, always treated his family physician (for such Addington became) with chivalrous courtesy. Largely

<sup>1</sup> Wrasall, iv, 151.

by the care of the doctor William Pitt was coaxed into maturity after his "wan" youth.<sup>1</sup> It was natural, then, that the sons should become acquainted, especially as young Addington, after passing through Winchester School and Brasenose College, Oxford, entered at Lincoln's Inn while Pitt was still keeping his terms there.

Considering the community of their studies and tastes, it is singular that few, if any, of their letters of this period survive. Such as have come down to us are the veriest scraps. Here, then, as elsewhere, some evil destiny (was it Bishop Tomline?) must have intervened to blot out the glimpses of the social side of the statesman's life. It is clear, however, that Pitt must have begun to turn Addington's thoughts away from Chancery Lane to Westminster; for the latter in 1783 writes eagerly against "the offensive Coalition of Fox and North." At Christmas, when Pitt leaped to office as Prime Minister, he sought to bring Addington into the political arena, and held out the prospect of some subordinate post. Addington accordingly stood for Devizes, and was chosen by a unanimous vote at the hustings in April 1784. Nevertheless, his cool and circumspect nature rose slowly to the height of the situation at Westminster. Externals were all in his favour. His figure was tall and well proportioned; his features, faultlessly regular, were lit up by a benevolent smile; and his deferential manners gave token of success either as family physician or family attorney. In fine, a man who needed only the spur of ambition, or the stroke of calamity, to achieve a respectable success. It is said that Pitt early bade him fix his gaze on the Speaker's chair, to which, in fact, he helped him in 1789, after Grenville's retirement. But, for the present, nothing stirred Addington's nature from its exasperating calm. As worldly inducements failed, Pitt finally made trial of poetry. During a ride together to Pitt's seat at Holwood, the statesman sought in vain to appeal to his ambition; but Addington—five years his senior, be it remembered—pleaded the disqualifying effects of early habits and disposition. Thereupon Pitt burst out with the following passage from Waller's poem on Henrietta Maria:

The lark that shuns on lofty boughs to build  
Her humble nest, lies silent in the field;

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<sup>1</sup> Pellew, "Life of Lord Sidmouth," i, 4.

But should the promise of a brighter day,  
Aurora smiling, bid her rise and play,  
Quickly she'll show 'twas not for want of voice,  
Or power to chime, she made so low a choice ;  
*Singing she mounts ; her airy notes are stretch'd*  
*Towards heaven, as if from heaven alone her notes she fetch'd.*

Then the statesman set spurs to his horse and left Addington far behind.' It is curious that when Addington's ambition was fully aroused, it proved to be an obstacle to Pitt and a danger to the country in the crisis of 1803-4.

Adverting now to certain details of Pitt's private life, we notice that he varied the time of his first residence on Putney Heath (August 1784-November 1785) by several visits to Brighton, perhaps in order to shake off the fatigue and disappointment attendant on his Irish and Reform policy. At that seaside resort he spent some weeks in the early autumn of 1785, enjoying the society of his old Cambridge friends, "Bob" Smith (afterwards Lord Carrington), Pratt (afterwards Lord Camden), and Steele. We can imagine them riding along the quaint little front, or on the downs, their interchange of thought and sallies of wit probably helping in no small degree the invigorating influences of sea air and exercise. If we may trust the sprightly but spiteful lines in one of the "Political Eclogues," it was at Brighton that Pitt at these times especially enjoyed the society of "Tom" Steele, whom he had made Secretary of the Treasury conjointly with George Rose. Unlike his colleague, whose visage always bore signs of the care and toil of his office, Steele was remarkable for the rotundity and joviality of his face and an inexhaustible fund of animal spirits.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was this which attracted Pitt to him in times of recreation. The lines above referred to occur in an effusion styled— "Rose, or the Complaint,"—where the hard working colleague is shown as bemoaning Pitt's preference for Steele:

But vain his hope to shine in Billy's eyes,  
Vain all his votes, his speeches, and his lies.  
Steele's happier claims the boy's regard engage,  
Alike their studies, nor unlike their age ;  
With Steele, companion of his vacant hours,  
Oft would he seek Brighton's sea girt towers ;

<sup>1</sup> Pellew, "Life of Lord Sidmouth," i, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Wrexall, iii, *ad fin.*



For Steele relinquish Beauty's trifling talk,  
With Steele each morning ride, each evening walk;  
Or in full tea-cups drowning cares of state  
On gentler topics urge the mock debate.

However much Pitt enjoyed Steele's company on occasions like these, he did not allow his feelings to influence him when a question of promotion arose. Steele's talents being only in moderate, his rise was slow, but he finally became one of the Paymasters of the Forces. In that station his conduct was not wholly satisfactory; and Pitt's friendship towards him cooled, though it was renewed not long before the Prime Minister's death.

For George Rose, on the other hand, despite his lack of joviality, Pitt cherished an ever deepening regard proportioned to the thoroughness and tactfulness of his services at the Treasury. In view of the vast number of applications for places and pensions, of which, moreover, Burke's Economy Bill had lessened the supply, the need of firm control at the Treasury is obvious; and Pitt and the country owed much to the man who for sixteen years held the purse-strings tight.<sup>1</sup> On his part Rose felt unwavering enthusiasm for his chief from the time of their first interview in Paris in 1783 until the dark days that followed Austerlitz. Only on two subjects did he refuse to follow Pitt, namely, on Parliamentary Reform, from which he augured "the most direful consequences," and the Slavery Question. That he ventured twice to differ decidedly from Pitt (in spite of earnest private appeals) proves his independence of mind as well as the narrowness of his outlook. He even offered to resign his post at the Treasury owing to their difference on Reform, but Pitt negatived this proposal. We need not accept his complacent statement that Pitt later on came over decidedly to his opinion on that topic.<sup>2</sup>

The tastes of the two friends were very similar, especially in their love of the country; and it was in the same month (September 1785) that each bought a small estate. We find Pitt writing at that time to Wilberforce respecting his purchase of "Holwood Hill," near Bromley, Kent, and stating that Rose had just bought an estate in the New Forest, which he vowed

<sup>1</sup> I distrust the charges of corrupt dealing brought against Rose respecting the next election at Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> "Diaries of George Rose," i, 32-37.

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was "just breakfasting distance from town." "We are all turning country gentlemen very fast," added the statesman. A harassing session like that of 1785 is certain to set up a centrifugal tendency; and we may be sure that the nearness of Holwood to Hayes was a further attraction. Not that Pitt was as yet fond of agriculture. He had neither the time nor the money to spare for the high farming which was then yearly adding to the wealth of the nation. But he inherited Chatham's love of arranging an estate, and he was now to find the delight of laying out grounds, planting trees and shrubs and watching their growth. Holwood had many charms—"a most beautiful spot, wanting nothing but a house fit to live in"—so he described it to Wilberforce.<sup>1</sup> He moved into his new abode on 5th November 1785, and during the rest of the vacation spent most of his time there, residing at Downing Street only on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Many affairs of State were decided at parties at Holwood, or, later on, at Dundas's villa at Wimbledon.

Pitt admitted to Wilberforce that the purchase of Holwood was a piece of folly; and this was soon apparent to all Pitt's friends who had old-fashioned notions of making both ends meet. That desirable result had rarely, if ever, been attained by the son of the magnificent Chatham. Sparing for the nation's exchequer, Pitt was prodigal of his own. The aristocratic *hauteur*, of which all but his friends complained, led him to disregard the peccadilloes of servants and the overcharges of tradesmen. A bachelor Prime Minister, whose nose is high in air, is good sport for parasites; and even before the purchase of Holwood, Pitt was in difficulties. During one of the visits to Brighthelmstone, "Bob" Smith undertook to overhaul his affairs, and found old and forgotten bills amounting to £7,914. The discovery came as a shock; for Pitt, with his usual hopefulness, had told his Mentor that, as three-quarters of his official salary were due, he would have enough for his current liabilities. A further scrutiny showed that tradesmen, in default of any present return, took care to ensure an abundant harvest in the future. The butcher usually sent, or charged for, three or four hundredweight of meat on a Saturday, probably because Pitt was often away for the week-end. The meat bill for January

<sup>1</sup> "Corresp. of Wilberforce," i, 9.

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1785, when Pitt generally dined out, was £96, which, reckoning the price at sixpence a pound, implied a delivery of 34 hundred-weight. Other bills for provisions (wrote Smith to Wilberforce) "exceed anything I could have imagined." Apparently they rose in proportion to Pitt's absence from home. His accounts were kept by a man named Wood, whose book-keeping seems to have been correct; but Smith begged Wilberforce to urge on Pitt the need of an immediate reform of his household affairs.<sup>1</sup> Whether it took place, we cannot tell; for this is one of the private subjects over which Bishop Tomline chose to draw the veil of propriety.

An economical householder would have found relief from the addition of £3,000 a year to his income. That was the net sum which accrued to him after August 1792, from the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports.<sup>2</sup> That Pitt felt more easy in his mind is clear from his letter to Lady Chatham, dated Downing Street, 11th November 1793. She had been in temporary embarrassment. He therefore sent £300, and gently chid her for concealing her need so long. He continued as follows: "My accession of income has hitherto found so much employment in the discharge of former arrears as to leave no very large fund which I can with propriety dispose of. This, however, will mend every day, and at all events I trust you will never scruple to tell me when you have the slightest occasion for any aid that I can supply."<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, Pitt soon fell into difficulties, and partly from his own generosity as Colonel of the Walmer Volunteers. As we shall also see, he gave £2,000 to the Patriotic Fund started in January 1798. But carelessness continued to be his chief curse. In truth his lordly nature and his early training in the household of Chatham unfitted him for the practice of that bourgeois virtue, frugality. That he sought to practise it for the Commonwealth is a signal proof of his patriotism. We shall see that his embarrassments probably hindered him from a marriage, which might have crowned with joy his somewhat solitary life.

In the career of Pitt we find few incidents of the lighter kind,

<sup>1</sup> "Corresp. of Wilberforce," i, 21-4.

<sup>2</sup> The gross income was £4,100: see Mr. E. W. Hamilton's estimate of Pitt's income (the total being £10,532) in App. C of Lord Rosebery's "Pitt."

<sup>3</sup> Pretyman MSS.

which diversify the lives of most statesmen of that age. Two such, however, connect him with the jovial society of Dundas. It was their custom to outline over their cups the course of the forthcoming debates; and on one occasion, when a motion was to be brought forward by Mr. (afterwards Earl) Grey, Dundas amused the company by making a burlesque oration on the Whig side. Pitt was so charmed by the performance that he declared that Dundas must make the official reply. The joke sounded well over wine; but great was the Scotsman's astonishment to find himself saddled with the task in the House. Members were equally taken aback; and the lobbies soon rustled with eager conjectures as to the reason why Pitt had surrendered his dearly cherished prerogative. It then transpired that the Prime Minister had acted partly on a whim, and partly on the conviction that a speaker who had so cleverly pleaded a case must be able to answer it with equal effect.<sup>1</sup>

The other incident is likewise Bacchic, and is also uncertain as to date. Pitt, Dundas, and Thurlow had been dining with Jenkinson at Croydon; and during their rollicking career back towards Wimbledon, they found a toll-bar gate between Streatham and Tooting carelessly left open. Wine, darkness, and the frolicsome spirit of youth prompted them to ride through and cheat the keeper. He ran out, called to them in vain, and, taking them for highwaymen, fired his blunderbuss at their retreating forms.<sup>2</sup> The discharge was of course as harmless as that of firearms usually was except at point-blank range; but the writers of the "Rolliad" got wind of the affair, and satirised Pitt's lawlessness in the following lines:

Ah, think what danger on debauch attend!  
 Let Pitt o'er wine preach temperance to his friends,  
 How, as he wandered darkling o'er the plain,  
 His reason drowned in Jenkinson's champagne,  
 A rustic's hand, but righteous fate withstood,  
 Had shed a premier's for a robber's blood.

Gaiety and grief often tread close on one another's heels; and Pitt had his full share of the latter. The sudden death of his sister Harriet, on 25th September 1786, was a severe blow. She had married his Cambridge friend, Elliot, and expired shortly after childbirth. She was his favourite sister, having entered closely and fondly into his early life. He was prostrated with

<sup>1</sup> G. Croly, "Memoirs of George IV.," i, 105, 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

grief, and for some time could not attend even to the public business which was his second nature. Eliot, now destined to be more than ever a friend and brother, came to his house and for some time lived with him. It will be of interest to print here a new letter of George III to a Mr. Frazer who had informed him of the sad event.

WINDSOR,

Sept. 25, 1786. 9.15 p.m.<sup>1</sup>

I AM excessively hurt, as indeed all my family are, at the death of the amiable Lady Harriot Elliot (*sic*); but I do not the less approve Mr. Frazer's attention in acquainting me of this very melancholy event. I own I dread the effect it may have on Mr. Pitt's health: I think it best not at this early period to trouble him with my very sincere condolence; but I know I can trust to the prudence of Mr. Frazer, and therefore desire he will take the most proper method of letting Mr. Pitt know what I feel for him, and that I think it kindest at present to be silent.

G. R.

The King further evinced his tactful sympathy by suggesting that Pitt should for a time visit his mother at Burton Pynsent. In other respects his private life was uneventfully happy. The conclusion of the commercial treaty with France, the buoyancy of the national revenue, and the satisfactory issue of the Dutch troubles must have eased his anxieties in the years 1786-87; and after the serious crisis last named, his position was truly enviable, until the acute situation arising from the mental malady of George III overclouded his prospects at the close of the year 1788.

Certainly Pitt was little troubled by his constituents. Almost the only proof of his parliamentary connection with the University of Cambridge (apart from warnings from friends at election times how so and so is to "be got at") is in a letter which I have discovered in the Hardwicke Papers. It refers to a Cambridge Debt Bill about to be introduced by Charles Yorke in April 1787, to which the University had requested Pitt to move certain amendments in its interest. It will be seen that Pitt proposed to treat the request rather lightly:

DEAR YORKE,

I am rather inclined to wish the Cambridge [Debt] Bill should pass without any alteration, unless you think there are material reasons

<sup>1</sup> Chevening MSS.

for it.—The impanelling the jury does not seem to be a point of much consequence, but seems most naturally to be the province of the mayor.—With regard to the appeal, I think we agreed to strike it out entirely.—As the Commission are a mixed body from the town, the county, and the University, there seems to be an impropriety in appealing either to the town sessions or the County Sessions, either of which may be considered as only one out of three parties interested. The decision of the Commission appears therefore the most satisfactory, and if I recollect right, it is final as the bill now stands.

Yours most sincerely,

W. Pitt.<sup>1</sup>

In the whole of Pitt's correspondence I have found only one episode which lights up the recesses of his mind. As a rule, his letters are disappointingly business-like and formal. He wrote as a Prime Minister to supporters, rarely as a friend to a friend. And those who search the hundreds of packets of the Pitt Papers in order to find the real man will be tempted to liken him to that elusive creature which, when pursued, shoots away among the rocks under a protective cloud of ink. At one point, however, we catch a glimpse of his innermost beliefs. Willerforce, having come under deep religious convictions in the autumn of 1785, resolved to retire for a time from all kinds of activity in order to take his bearings anew. Then he wrote to Pitt a full description of his changed views of life, stating also his conviction that he must give up some forms of work and amusement, and that he could never be so much of a party man as he had hitherto been. Pitt's reply, of 2nd December 1785, has recently seen the light. After stating that any essential opposition between them would cause him grief but must leave his affection quite untouched, he continued as follows:

Forgive me if I cannot help expressing my fear that you are nevertheless deluding yourself into principles which have but too much tendency to contract your own object and to render your virtues and

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Add. MS. 45684. In May 1785, Pitt drafted a letter to the members of the Senate of the University of Cambridge, asking for the support in his intended candidature for the office of High Steward, then vacant owing to the death of Lord Hardwicke. He expressed the hope that the crisis in public affairs would be deemed a sufficient excuse for not making the application in person. He was elected. The draft of the letter is in the library of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

your talents useless both to yourself and to mankind. I am not, however, without hopes that my anxiety paints this too strongly. For you confess that the character of religion is not a gloomy one, and that it is not that of an enthusiast. But why then this preparation of solitude, which can hardly avoid tincturing the mind either with melancholy or superstition? If a Christian may act in the several relations of life, must he seclude himself from them all to become so? Surely the principles as well as the practice of Christianity are simple, and lead not to meditation only but to action. I will not, however, enlarge upon these subjects now. What I ask of you, as a mark both of your friendship and of the candour which belongs to your mind, is to open yourself fully and without reserve to one, who, believe me, does not know how to separate his happiness from your own.<sup>1</sup>

On the morrow, a Saturday, he called on Wilberforce at Wimbledon, and the friends for two hours unburdened their hearts to one another. We know little of that moving converse. The two men had ideals so different that unison was out of the question. The statesman, so we learn, had never reflected much on religion, that is, in the keenly introspective sense in which Wilberforce now used the word. To Pitt, as to most Englishmen, religion meant the acceptance of certain doctrines laid down by the State Church, and we may describe it as largely political and conventional, buttressing the existing order, but by no means transforming life or character. One glance alone we gain into the sanctuary of his thoughts; he told Wilberforce that Bishop Butler's "Analogy" raised in his mind more doubts than it answered—a proof (perhaps the only proof that survives) of his cherishing under that correct exterior a critical and questioning spirit.

To Wilberforce, thenceforth, all doubts were visitations of the devil. Indeed, the microscopic watch which he kept on his thoughts and moods seemed likely to stunt his activities. From this he was perhaps saved by his friendship with Pitt. True, they could no longer tread the same path. Pitt obeyed that call to action on behalf of his country which from his boyhood had deadened all other sounds. Wilberforce for a long time held aloof from politics as debateable ground beset with snares to the soul. And yet, though the two men diverged, the promptings of affection kept them ever within hail. No gulf

<sup>1</sup> "Private Papers of Wilberforce," 13, 14.

ever opened out such as Coleridge finely pictured as yawning between two parted friends:

They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
A dreary sea now flows between.

Indeed, Wilberforce found with some surprise that on most questions they agreed as before<sup>1</sup>—a proof that there was no desertion of principle on Pitt's part after the session of 1785. We may go further, and assert that in their changed relations the two friends exerted upon each other a mutually beneficent influence. The new convictions of Wilberforce tended to refine the activities of his friend; and Pitt's practical good sense helped to launch the philanthropist on that career of usefulness in which he could both glorify God and uplift myriads of negroes.

A sharp difference of opinion respecting the war with France overclouded their lives in the year 1793. Wilberforce fully recognized the sincerity of the Cabinet's efforts to avoid a rupture, and admitted that Ministers had not pursued a "war system." But shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, when he was about to speak in favour of conciliation, Pitt took the strange step of sending Bankes to him, earnestly begging him not to speak, as it might do irreparable mischief, and promising him an opportunity for the statement of his views. That opportunity did not come; and Wilberforce evidently resented this attempt to make political capital out of their friendship.<sup>2</sup> The breach between them did not widen until late in the year 1794, when Wilberforce deemed it his duty to move an amendment in favour of peace. Bankes and Duncombe supported it; but it was easily defeated. In the following year the relations between Pitt and Wilberforce on this question became so strained as to cause both of them deep distress. Indeed Pitt, who generally enjoyed profound slumbers, for a time suffered from insomnia. The only other occasions when sleep fled from him were the sudden resignation of Earl Temple late in 1783, the mutiny at the Nore, and the arrival of the news of Trafalgar.

The old feelings began to reassert themselves, when Pitt

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Wilberforce," i, 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 10-13.



spoke strongly in favour of the Abolition of the Slave Trade (26th February 1795); but the friends did not meet for nearly a month, and then with some little embarrassment on both sides. All shadows, however, vanished in a few months' time, when Wilberforce came to see that his friend longed for peace so soon as it was compatible with security. Thereafter their old friendship revived, though tinged with the sadness attending disappointed hopes.

Pitt did not so readily forget the independence now and again displayed by Bankes, for instance, in opposing Parliamentary Reform, the Westminster Scrutiny, and the continuance of the war. Though they were friendly at Cambridge, and afterwards at Goostree's Club and in the House, Pitt never warmed to Bankes, whose nature indeed was too precise, cold, and prudent ever to call forth affection. Respected by all for his sound but stolid speeches, he for forty years sat at Westminster as member for Corfe Castle. No one seems ever to have thought of making Bankes either a Minister or a peer. At a later time the circle of Pitt's friends included Canning and Wellesley, who will receive notice in later chapters.

On the whole, Pitt seems to have been somewhat exacting in his friendships. One of his early comrades complained that all suggestions to the Prime Minister must, under pain of his resentment, go forth to the world as emanations of his wisdom. This is to sacrifice friendliness and candour to egotism and parliamentary punctilio. True, no statesman can afford to neglect prudential considerations; and we may freely grant that the cautious calculations of Pitt rarely obsessed his whole being, as that of Napoleon was dominated by his egotism. We do not find Pitt acting, still less speaking, in the sense which prompted the remark of Napoleon about an over scrupulous servant: "He is not devoted to me; he does not want to get on."

It must be confessed that there is something wanting about Pitt. He lacked geniality and glow alike in his treatment of men, and in his attitude towards the aspirations of the age then dawning. Probably this defect sprang from a physical basis. It must be remembered that Chatham was nearly all his life a martyr to gout. He bequeathed this weakness to his second son, a fact which may account for the coldness of Pitt's nature. Just as creatures with a torpid circulation love to bask in the sun, so his chilliness may have prompted the cravings for the Bacchic

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society of Dundas and Steele. In this respect he suffers by comparison with Fox, the full-blooded man, the impetuous foe, the open-handed, forgiving friend, whose character somewhat resembles that of Antony, deified by Cleopatra:

For his bounty,  
There was no winter in 't; an autumn 'twas  
That grew the more by reaping; his delights  
Were dolphin like; they showed his back above  
The element they lived in.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Antony and Cleopatra," v, act. 2.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ISOLATION

(1784, 1785)

The situation of Europe appears never to have been so critical at any epoch since the breaking out of the Thirty Years' War as it is at the present moment.—SIR JAMES HARRIS, *2nd February 1785*.

THE American War of Independence left Great Britain in a critical situation both internally and in relation to other Powers. She had been at war with France, Spain, the Dutch Netherlands, and the United States, while the Baltic Powers threatened her with hostilities owing to her insistence on an exacting maritime code. As she refused to come to a compromise on these questions, the period of peace which followed after the Treaty of Versailles (September 1783) did not lead to a resumption of friendly relations with the States above named. She was in part hated, in part despised.

The prevalent feeling found striking expression in an intercepted letter of Frederick the Great, which our able ambassador, Sir James Harris, saw at St. Petersburg. The crabbed monarch therein described Great Britain as a land ruined by an unfortunate war, and unable ever again to become a formidable rival to France. Here the wish was father to the thought. "Old sour-mug," as the Berliners dubbed him, had not forgiven his desertion by England at the close of the Seven Years' War, and never missed an opportunity of affronting George III and damaging his interests. It was he who, in the years 1778 and 1779, thwarted Harris's plan of effecting an Anglo-Russian alliance, which might have nullified the efforts of France in the American War; and now, at the end of that struggle, the resentful old King did his best to perpetuate the isolation of the Island Power. In name, he was our ally, the treaty of 1756 never

having been broken; but in reality he was the wildest of opponents, his fleeting fits of complaisance being designed to make bad blood between England and the Emperor Joseph II.<sup>1</sup>

The ceaseless rivalry of Austria and Prussia would generally have enabled Great Britain to count on the support of one of those Powers. But while Frederick flouted us from senile spleen, Joseph held aloof from motives of policy. Not only did he hold England cheap, but he saw in her an obstacle to one of his many schemes. As he was then one of the most active of European rulers, we may well begin our survey of foreign affairs by a short account of him and of his aims.

Joseph II (1780-1790) held the extensive lands of the House of Hapsburg-Lorraine, ranging from the Milanese to Cracow, and from the Carpathians to the Breisgau on the Upper Rhine; but these States, especially those in Italy and Swabia, lacked the strength that comes from continuity. His position as "Emperor" (that is, elective head of the Holy Roman Empire) implied little; for the confederate princes of that moribund organism had almost complete sovereign powers in the component States. To breathe new life into "the Empire" was almost hopeless; but he set himself to solidify and extend his hereditary dominions by a series of attractively perilous projects. He also sought to centralize at Vienna the governing powers of his very diverse domains, and to carry out reforms, social, agrarian, and religious, which aroused widespread opposition. Many of his schemes were generous and enlightened, but they stirred the resentment of landowners, priests, and Nationalists, especially in Hungary and in his Belgic Provinces. In order to carry out these programmes, he sought or maintained alliances with the most powerful States, namely, Russia and France.

Here we are concerned chiefly with his connection with the latter Power. Despite temporary causes of friction, the Franco-Austrian alliance of 1756 still subsisted; and it had gained new vitality by the marriage of Louis XVI (then Dauphin) with Marie Antoinette, a daughter of Maria Theresa and sister of Joseph II, whose efforts on behalf of Viennese policy were to

<sup>1</sup> "Maluersburg Papers," ii, 24, 26, 39, 55. The character and career of Sir James Harris (the future Earl of Maluersburg) will concern us later. Iren. F. K. Wittichen, "Preussen und England in der Europäischen Politik 1785-1788," *ad int.*, condemns the resentment of Frederick the Great as a mistake, fatal to the interests both of Prussia and England.

effect something for that Court, at the expense of her popularity at Paris. Thus, early in the year 1785, when Joseph II revived a scheme, which had been thwarted in 1778, for the exchange of his discontented Belgic lands for the Electorate of Bavaria, all Europe saw in it the hand of Marie Antoinette. The absorption of Bavaria would have made the Hapsburgs absolutely supreme in Central Europe, while the transfer of the Bavarian Electoral House to Brussels would have broken down the Barrier arrangements which British statecraft had ever sought to build up on the North of France. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) had assigned the then Spanish Netherlands to the House of Austria in order to set limits to the expansion of France; and the transfer could not be made without the consent of the signatory Powers, the chief being England.

In other respects, too, Joseph's Belgian policy ran counter to British interests. He had ordered the Dutch troops out of the fortresses (Mons, Namur, etc.), which, by the Barrier Treaty of 1715, they had the right to occupy at the expense of those districts; and he further set at naught well-established rights of the Dutch, first by furbishing up certain musty claims to their frontier stronghold, Maestricht; and secondly, by declaring the navigation of the estuary of the Scheldt, below Antwerp, free from Dutch control. In the latter demand he undoubtedly had "natural law" on his side, while the law of nations was as clearly for the Dutch, the Treaty of Münster (1648) having empowered them to close that estuary to all commerce but their own. As a result the once flourishing trade of Antwerp was wellnigh strangled, and it was reasonable for Joseph II to seek to end this state of things. Nevertheless, his conduct in setting aside that treaty-right without consulting other Powers, was no less indefensible than the same action of the French Revolutionists in the autumn of 1792, which largely brought about the Great War. In fact, the conduct of Joseph II towards his own subjects and neighbouring States fitly earned him the designation, the "crowned revolutionist"; and, had his power of carrying out schemes equalled his facility in weaving them, he might have figured in history as a Teutonic Napoleon.

Equally disturbing and more incisive was the influence of Catharine II of Russia. It is needless to describe here the strange career of that daughter of a poor German prince who ultimately became Czarina. She was justly suspected of having

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connived at the murder of her consort Peter III; and her relations with her son, the future Paul I, were severely strained by her numerous amours. But no indulgences dulled the vision or the ambition of Catharine. Her freshness of mind and facility of expression dazzled her philosophic visitors, Diderot and Grimm; and these varied powers were held in leash by a virile will which made her one of the greatest political forces of the age. Her resolve to aggrandize Russia centred in two great enterprises, the partition of Poland and the overthrow of the Turkish Power. In the first partition of Poland (1772) she had the concurrence of Frederick the Great and the reluctant consent of Maria Theresa; but the death of the latter, in November 1780, removed all checks on Joseph II, who for fifteen years had been associated with her in the government of the Austrian States.

The two most daring rulers in Europe in the year 1781 came to an understanding which foreboded a general upheaval. Their arrangement did not take the form of a treaty, for Joseph, as Emperor, claimed precedence in all titles, which Catharine, proud of the comparatively new Imperial title of the Czars of Muscovy, refused to recognize. Accordingly, in May 1781, the punctilious sovereigns exchanged letters, lending themselves to mutual support; Joseph undertaking to assist the Czarina in her designs against the Turks, while she guaranteed to Joseph the integrity of his dominions, thus enabling him to adopt the forward policy whose developments in the Netherlands we have noticed.

In vain did Frederick the Great and England seek, though by widely diverse means, to dissolve this alliance. Capricious and violent in private life and in her likes and dislikes, Catharine showed statesmanlike firmness and caution in public affairs. Her firmness appeared in her refusal to take the tempting bait of Minorca which our ambassador Harris skillfully held out to her in 1780, if she would mediate in favour of England in the American War. She rightly saw more profit in heading the Armed Neutrality League; and Harris used all his arts in vain.<sup>1</sup> Her caution shines in her charming repartee to Diderot after the French philosopher had vivaciously sketched his plan of reno-

<sup>1</sup> "Malmebury Diaries," i, 374, 404, 532. He thought her hasty, and swayed by passion or caprice; but events proved that she did not lack foresight or brinness.

vating Russia. "M. Diderot, you forget in all your plans of reform the difference in our positions; you only work on paper, which endures all things; it opposes no obstacle either to your imagination or to your pen. But I, poor Empress that I am, work on a sensitive and irritable medium, the human skin." In these phrases lies the secret of the success of Catharine and of the ultimate failure of Joseph. He forgot that the sentient skin is not parchment: she never forgot it.

For the present, their alliance promised to make them the arbiters of Europe, Catharine in the East, and her ally in the centre and the Netherlands. It was therefore desirable for Great Britain to gain their alliance, or at least their friendship. But our overtures were repulsed at both Courts. In vain did Sir Murray Keith, our respected envoy at Vienna, seek to undermine the unnatural alliance between France and Austria, and suggest a return to the traditional connection between the Courts of St. James and Vienna; the Francophile policy of the Austrian Chancellor, Kaunitz, was still in the ascendant.

In vain also did Alleyne Fitzherbert, now the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, remind Catharine II of the many interests, trading and political, we had in common, and of the help we had given to the infant navy of Russia in officers and men, and in granting facilities for its repair at Portsmouth and Port Mahon.<sup>1</sup> With her, past services weighed but lightly as against present expediency. The assurances of the previous decade as to the natural links between England and Russia were ridiculed, probably because her keen eyes discerned, sooner than those of any British statesman, the eventual opposition of England to her scheme of seizing Constantinople. As a prelude to this enterprise she annexed the Crimea in the year 1783; and, as we shall see later, she thenceforth bent all her energies to the task of enthroning at Constantinople her grandson, Constantine. The alliance of Austria being essential, and the union of the Hapsburgs with France being but little impaired by Joseph's Belgic plans (at least up to the end of 1784), she courted Paris and slighted London. A proposal which Fitzherbert made at St. Petersburg in April 1784, for an alliance with Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, fell to the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the trend of European politics in the East, in Ger-

<sup>1</sup> Mahan, "Influence of Sea Power," i, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Martens, iii, 327.

y, and in the Netherlands told heavily against England, increased the natural reluctance of any Power to seek the leadership of a beaten nation. It is at such times that the desirability of the idea of the Balance of Power is seen. No one took the slightest interest in restoring the Islanders to their rightful position in the world. For this they had to trust themselves and to their young leader.

On the point of fact, Pitt and his Foreign Secretary, the Marquis of Carmarthen, at first desired little more than to be left alone. There is always the greatest of British interests, and it was so eminently at that time, when the interest on the National Debt absorbed three-fourths of the nation's revenue. Foreign affairs interested the Cabinet but little, so we gather from the Memoranda of the Marquis of Carmarthen (afterwards Duke of Devonshire); but he there states that Pitt applied himself closely to correspondence with ambassadors, and that, in a conversation which they had together at Wimbledon in May 1784, he decided that they agreed as to the desirability of severing the connection of Austria with France, and of forming some alliance which would counterbalance the power of the French and Spanish Houses of Bourbon; but at the same time Pitt was strongly convinced of the need of avoiding any engagements which might lead to war. That George III had lost his bellicose temper was shown from the closing sentence of his letter of 6th July 1784 to Carmarthen: "Till I see this country in a situation more respectable as to Army, Navy, and Finances, I cannot think of anything that may draw us into troubled waters either safe or unsound."

This sensible pronouncement was called forth by the proposal of Pitt and Carmarthen to make another overture to the Empress Catharine. An opportunity occurred owing to a recent pact between France and Sweden, according to the former naval depot and other special privileges at the port of Gothenburg. As this might enable French warships to control the mouth of the Baltic, it threatened the interests of England, Denmark, and Russia; and the British Cabinet, always intent on regaining the favour of the Czarina, began to sound the alarm at St. Petersburg and Copenhagen. Carmarthen sought

"Leeds Memoranda" (edited by Mr. Oscar Browning), 101.

B.M. Add. MS. N. 17914. This letter and other documents of interest appear in my volume "Pitt and Napoleon Miscellaneous."



the advice of Sir James Harris, and received the following witty reply:

Cuttnalls, Oct. 6, 1784.<sup>1</sup>

Should the Northern Lights be really enlightened, and a spark of common sense be added to Kitty's bright understanding I hope my friend Fitz[herbert] will accomplish the point we have all failed in. I cannot but suppose that the Ch[auce]llor and Lord C. will defer to your opinion, and that your next messenger will carry positive and particular instructions both to Hamlet and Semiramis.

"Semiramis" (Catharine) proved to be no less obdurate to Fitzherbert than to Harris, though the instructions loaned to the former had been drawn up in a masterly manner by Pitt himself. It is clear that the young statesman took a keen interest in the overture to Russia; for when Carmarthen sent him a draft of his "Instructions for Mr. Fitzherbert," he sent the hitherto unpublished replies, which throw an interesting light on his relations to that Minister, and his views on foreign policy.

BRIGHTHELMSTON, Wed<sup>d</sup> night. O.C. 13, 1784.<sup>2</sup>

MY DEAR LORD,

I return you with many thanks the draft of the Instructions to Mr. Fitzherbert. I trouble you at the same time, as you permitted me, with the sketch of the Ideas which had occurred to me on the same subject. I have the satisfaction to perceive, as I flattered myself must be the case, that our Ideas do not seem to differ in any respect. I hardly need give you the trouble of reading my scrawl. I leave it however to your consideration, tho' hardly thinking anything in it will repay the time of perusing it. You will, I am sure, excuse a prod at least of my solicitude on a subject on which we feel equally interested.

That Carmarthen set a high value on the "scrawl," appears from the fact that it bears the pencil-mark, "sent to Russia the 15th." As it was probably the first diplomatic note ever penned by Pitt, it deserves to be quoted in full, especially as it proves that he was no advocate of isolation. He saw too well the dangers of it. Further, those who take pleasure in contrasting his orderly and forcible statement of ideas with a loose and feeble

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28060. "Lord C." may be Lord Clarendon, who had previously given advice to Lord Carmarthen.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

statement may consult the draft of Carmarthen, which that Minister had the good sense to replace by Pitt's: <sup>1</sup>

It is His Majesty's earnest desire to regulate his conduct on the occasion of the late Treaty between France and Sweden, in the strictest concert with the Court of Petersburg. And therefore, altho' it would have been a great satisfaction to have known first what line appeared to the Empress most proper to be pursued, we have no difficulty in stating without reserve what the situation appears to us to call for. We wish at the same time to know whether any other specific measures have been thought of by the Empress, and we are ready in every respect to enter into the fullest and most confidential communication.

We are not aware of any treaty or of any other ground, which gives a direct and absolute right to object to any arrangement which the King of Sweden may have thought proper to make in this instance with regard to a Port of his own dominions; altho' the possibility of its being carried to the extent which there is reason to suspect is ultimately attended cannot but occasion great jealousy, and altho' even in a commercial light, it may possibly not be a matter of indifference. The difficulty of making a direct opposition in the first instance seems, by Mr. Fitzherbert's report, to have struck the Ministers of the Empress in the same manner. On this supposition, the only immediate step which appears natural to take is to demand from the Court of Stockholm an explanation to what extent the privileges granted to the French are *intended* to be carried. A representation to this purpose should, we think, be made jointly in the names of the Courts of London, Petersburg, and Copenhagen, if the latter Court should be disposed (as we trust will be the case) to co-operate on this occasion. This may produce such an explanation from Sweden as may furnish a strong additional ground for interference hereafter to prevent the dangerous signs of France, if she should be inclined to avail herself of the privileges she has now acquired to carry them into execution. If the answer should not be explicit and satisfactory, further measures should be concerted to guard against the effects to be apprehended. Indeed, whatever colour may be given to the transaction, it would not seem wise to trust implicitly to assurances and explanations. In every light, therefore, the only substantial security would be in an establishment of a permanent and solid connection between this country and Russia

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 2806a. It is endorsed, in Pitt's hand: "Oct. 12, 1784, *mem<sup>o</sup>* for Instructions to Mr. Fitzherbert." Carmarthen's draft is almost certainly that which is printed by Mr. Oscar Browning in the "Leeds memoranda," p. 104 *n*; but the evidence here given shows that that draft must be Pitt's, as Mr. Browning at that time (1884) naturally inferred.

and Denmark, which their common interests render on all accounts most desirable. Without such a system, [the] consequences of this attempt cannot be effectually obviated, direct opposition to it seeming hardly practicable; and desultory and unconnected efforts which terminate in one single and separate point (even if the occasion admitted of their being exerted to the utmost) promising comparatively but little effect. Explanations and assurances, however explicit, unless such measures are taken to enforce an adherence to them, will be but a feeble and precarious barrier against the encroaching spirit which has dictated this project. Even if this particular measure should be defeated, the same spirit (unless effectual and systematic steps are taken to counteract it) will show itself in other shapes and on innumerable occasions. This object therefore of an alliance between the three Courts seems to be the only measure, under the present circumstances, which promises effectual support to their common interests and to the general tranquillity of Europe. And there seems no reason to imagine that there can be any obstacle in the way of its completion, which a cordial and mutual inclination, and a free and open discussion will not easily remove.

All was in vain. There was more method in Catharine II's waywardness than Harris understood. Her aim being the preparation of a great fleet at Sevastopol with a view to the conquest of Turkey, she needed, as we have seen, the co-operation of Austria; but that implied friendship with France, and therefore coolness to England.<sup>1</sup> These motives long continued to govern the policy of the Empress, and prevented the formation of any good understanding with her.

As for the Emperor, Joseph II, there was small hope of an alliance with him. The emergence, early in 1785, of his pet scheme of a Belgic-Bavarian exchange was a palpable threat to the old Germanic System, of which George III, as Elector of Hanover, was a pillar; and he knew right well that the Court of St. James would steadfastly oppose the weakening of the Barrier in Flanders which must ensue from so violent a change. Sir James Harris summed up the opinion of our statesmen when he said that that Barrier against the encroachments of France had "ever been deemed essential to the interests of Europe in general

<sup>1</sup> This is well set forth in the despatches of Lord Dalrymple, British Ambassador at Berlin, to Carmarthen. The latter wrote to Harris on 24th February 1786, that Vorontzoff would try to persuade Catharine II to restore the "good system," and to induce Joseph II to help in the work; but nothing came of it (B.M. Add. MSS., 28061).

and to those of England in particular; but it is destroyed the moment the Low Countries either belong to France directly, or are governed by a sovereign devoted to her influence."<sup>1</sup>

We here touch upon a question which, after being the fruitful cause of wars from the time of the Plantagenets, was soon to involve Great Britain in the struggle with Revolutionary France, and yet again with Napoleon. The effort to prevent France acquiring complete control over the Netherlands was to be the chief work of William Pitt—a career far other than that which he had marked out for himself, and into which, as we shall see, he was drawn most reluctantly. The struggle presents three well-marked phases: the first concerns chiefly the disputes between the Stadholder of the United Provinces and the Patriots, abetted by France, which finally resulted in a complete triumph for the former, thanks to the action of Prussia and England and the formation of the Triple Alliance of 1788. In the second period Revolutionary France, with the help of the Patriots, overran those provinces, and set up the Batavian or Dutch Republic. The uneasy Peace of Amiens ended in 1804, largely because Bonaparte insisted on treating that Republic as a dependency of France; and Pitt's life closed in the midst of the world strife that ensued. But the Treaties of Vienna carried out (what Napoleon never would have agreed to) the erection of a seemingly solid Barrier against France, the Kingdom of the United Netherlands.

These mighty convulsions arose very largely from a contention as to the fate of the Netherlands. The importance of States depends not so much on their size as on their situation; and the Dutch and Belgic Netherlands, forming the feluges of the French and Teutonic peoples, derive great importance from that circumstance, or perhaps even more from their occupying the coast-line beside the mouths of the Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt, which contains fine harbours and is peopled by an enterprising and industrious folk. The conduct of a British Government with respect to those lands is, so to speak, a barometric test of its skill and energy. None but the weakest

<sup>1</sup> "Malinesbury Diaries," ii, 924. Memorandum of 2nd February 1785.

<sup>2</sup> Even after the disaster of 1813 Napoleon wrote, "Holland is a French country and will remain so for ever" ("Lettres inédites," 6th November 1813).

and most craven of Administrations has ever allowed a great hostile Power to dominate the mouths of those rivers. It was no idle boast of Napoleon that at his great naval port of Antwerp he held a pistol at the head of England. Doubly true would that vaunt be of a Great Power which held Rotterdam and Amsterdam. In a description of the struggle with France in 1785-7 for supremacy in the Dutch Netherlands, we are concerned with the prelude of what was to be a mighty trilogy of war.

The fatuity of Lord North's Administration was nowhere more glaringly shown than in the high-handed proceedings at sea which embroiled us with the United Provinces, but it should be remembered that three provinces out of the seven strongly objected to go to war. Accordingly, that ill-knit confederacy conducted the war without vigour; and, after Dutch commerce had suffered severely, it concluded peace with Great Britain in 1783, ceding the station of Negapatam in India. Resentment against England was blended with indignation against the Anglophile Stadholder, William V, who was accused of having paralysed the efforts of his country. He was even reported by the Patriots or democrats to have expressed the hope, after the Dutch success at the Dogger Bank, that the English fleet had not suffered much. These and other silly tales acquired some credibility from the fact that he was the son of the Princess Anne, daughter of George II, who had imbued him with a love of her country. As his guardian and instructor in statecraft was Duke Lewis of Brunswick, whose intermeddling finally hastened his departure from the country, the popular movement for the lessening of the Stadholder's powers acquired strength from the hatred of foreigners and foreign ways always so strong in that home-loving folk. These, then, were the circumstances which brought the disputes between the Patriots and the Orange party to a crisis in the years 1785-7, and threatened to plunge Europe into a great war. The immediate causes were petty and local. The possible results were of world-wide importance.

The functions of the hereditary Stadholder had undergone several changes according to the exigencies of the times. In the long struggle with Spain, as later with Louis XIV, the Dutch had wisely entrusted to the Princes of Orange the chief executive powers, only to go back to strictly republican and federal customs when the crisis was past. The same expedient held good

during the invasion of the *Maréchal de Saxe* in 1746-7, and with a similar sequel. Thus, to the House of Orange the Dutch looked for a *Cincinnatus* in times of stress, but expected him afterwards to go back to his tulips. The advantage of such an arrangement is obvious, provided that the populace is fully agreed as to the time of summoning *Cincinnatus* and the time of dismissal; also that that illustrious House could ever furnish a supply of men doughty in war and submissive in peace.

But here lay the difficulty: that the Prince and their supporters objected to arrangements which implied phenomenal powers of activity and hibernation. A demand arose that the Republic should so far centralize its governing powers as to be ready against emergencies; and in 1747 the United Provinces adopted a constitution whereby the Stadholderate became a perpetual office, hereditary in the House of Orange. It was confirmed by all the provinces in 1766; and until recently no one had disputed the right of the Prince to command the armed forces, both military and naval, and to exercise a large amount of control over the executive functions of the provinces. He shared these last with the States General, representing all the provinces, and with the States of the several provinces. Nevertheless, these bodies, together with their Grand Pensionaries, *Gereffiers*, and the Regents (or chief magistrates) of towns, looked jealously on his prerogatives and sharply resented any change tending to unify and centralize the forces of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

In truth, the task of holding together the United Provinces was like that of grasping oiled billiard balls. They were, in effect, independent States, having power to decide on peace and war, make treaties and raise loans. Differing in their constitutions, they also stood in different relations to the Stadholderate. The duties of the States General were to uphold the Union framed at Utrecht in 1579, and, as far as possible, to supervise foreign policy and national defence, the executive side of these functions falling to the Stadholder and a Council of State. But ratifica-

<sup>1</sup> See Colenbrander, "*De Patentschijf*," i, 415, for the Prince's difficulty in forming (February 1784) a permanent force of 8,000 sailors subject to the Council of War and not to the provincial Estates; also "*A View of the Policy . . . of the United Provinces*" (Dublin, 1787). As Grenville wrote to Pitt from The Hague on 31st July 1787, that the Dutch understood their Constitution very imperfectly ("*Dropmore P.*," iii, 410), I may be pardoned for not seeking to unravel it here.

tion by the States of the several provinces, or at least by a majority of them, was needful to give validity to all such decisions and actions. When we further learn that the Regencies of the chief towns had the right of ratifying the decisions of the States of their provinces, we can understand the magnitude of the task which confronted the Stadholders and Marlborough in defending those clannish communities.

The alleged treachery of the Stadholder during the late war with England, together with resentment at his centralizing efforts, had now roused these local instincts to a state of fury, which William V seemed unable either to quell or to calm. In truth, that hapless ruler was irresolution personified. His rôle was always one of passivity. Rarely did he show a spark of spirit or turn the tables on his opponents, though he might easily have thrown on them the responsibility for the misfortunes of the war, of which they, not he, were the cause.<sup>1</sup> Compared with him, that other political nullity, Louis XVI, seemed a man of firmness and energy. Strange to say, the lottery of marriage had given to each of them an active and capable consort. In her smaller sphere, Wilhelmina, Princess of Orange, played a part not unlike that of Marie Antoinette. She was niece of Frederick the Great and shared in the strong qualities that are rarely eclipsed in the House of Hohenzollern; but for the present she was doomed idly to chafe at the humiliating restrictions of her lot. The lynx eyes of Sir James Harris soon detected her real feelings for her husband, which, though curbed by wifely duty, now and again broke forth. In the as yet unpublished letters of Harris to the Marquis of Carmarthen are sharp comments on the dullness and torpor of the Prince. These piquant words describe the relations of that ill-matched pair: "He is so jealous of her sense and power that he would not even go to Paradise by her influence; and she has so mean an opinion of his capacity, and, in general, that kind of contempt a high-spirited woman feels for an inferior male being, that I see no hopes of bringing them to that degree of cohesion so highly necessary for the completion of my future plans."<sup>2</sup>

The man who wrote these words had already seen much of

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 92-4, 222-4.

<sup>2</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28060, Letter of 23rd August 1785. These "private" letters are often more interesting and important than those printed in the "Malmesbury Diaries," which form but a small portion of the whole.

men and affairs. Born at Salisbury in 1746, Harris was educated at Oxford, where his acquaintance with Fox instilled into him Whig principles. After completing his studies at Leyden, he entered the diplomatic service, served with distinction at Madrid and Berlin, and acted as ambassador at Petersburg in the years 1777-82, spending there, so it is said, £20,000 of his private fortune, in his country's service. Returning to England, he entered Parliament as member for Christchurch, and warmly supported Fox. His handsome presence and lively conversation won him high favour at Carlton House, and afterwards, probably at the suggestion of Pitt, he gave good advice to the Prince of Wales. A leader in society, as in the diplomatic world, the brilliant Harris was courted on all sides; but popularity did not dull his love for his wife; and the strong expressions of friendship which occur in the correspondence between him and Carmarthen show that these versatile and witty men (the latter wrote a comedy which earned the praise of Warton) had a deep fund of staunchness and fidelity. Their affection had some political results. The first article in the political creed of Sir James Harris was hatred of France; and the intervention of Pitt in the affairs of the Foreign Office may be ascribed to his perception of the Gallophobe bias which the vehement and persuasive Harris imparted to the policy of Carmarthen.

Such was the envoy who at the close of the year 1784 proceeded to The Hague, to uphold the cause of the Stadholder and England against the Patriots and France. The outlook seemed of the gloomiest. "There is not, I fear" (so he wrote on 7th December), "the most distant prospect of reclaiming this country." And again, on 11th March 1785: "We have nothing to expect from this country. Passive, tame, and void of every public virtue, they [the Orange party] will submit to everything. The Prince now talks of going away, of selling his demences in these provinces and retiring to Germany—a resolution which, if ever he carries it into execution, will complete his character."<sup>1</sup> As for the refusal of Frederick the Great to help his niece Wilhelmina, it cut the chivalrous Harris to the quick. His private letters to Carmarthen breathe hatred against France, but contempt of Prussia. When Frederick coolly advised her to disarm the Patriots by coming to terms with France, the impetuous Harris

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Add. MSS., 28060.



burst forth: "The knot must be cut, not untied, and of Prussia's half measures rejected."<sup>1</sup> Admiration for the fortunate princess added vehemence to his language. He was far more frank and genuine than Catharine of Russia; very little of the flattery which he vainly lavished on her mis. He succeeded in persuading the Princess to trust rather than Prussia; and it is clear that he worked for a pact between Great Britain, Austria, and the Netherlands, the inclusion of Russia and Denmark if possible. But in hearing of the indignities that she daily had to bear at the Hague, he forgot mere questions of policy. "Now and then," he wrote on 9th September 1785 "my thoughts get worked up, I think of flesh and blood when I see a pair of fine eyes and tears starting from them, but I soon suppress this idea. Perhaps it was well that the Prince and Princess left The Hague and went to reside at Nymeguen, in faithful Guelderland, the Prussian Duchy of Cleves.

As Pitt looked away from the turmoil at Westminster in the year of the Reform Bill and the Irish Propositions, he well feel dismay at the almost indescribable welter on the continent. On all sides the old order was breaking up. Two Empires took the lead in disruptive schemes which threatened the smaller States with ruin. Intellectual keenness and moral force helped on the coming cataclysm. Catharine and Frederick were by far the ablest rulers of their age. Frederick, to moroseness, was content to wait for favours from Austria which were never forthcoming. France as yet showed no sign of that weakness which was soon to overtake her. Louis XVI was a nonentity; but in Marie Antoinette the French alliance had its corner stone. Moreover, the Foreign Minister, Vergennes, was a man of outstanding ability. His hostility to England had been notorious; and even now he was reviving the French East India Company, and was pressing the Sultan for trading facilities in Egypt and the Red Sea, threatening our ascendancy in India.<sup>2</sup> To complete the survey, we may note that England had disputes with Spain concerning the rights of British merchants on the Mosquito

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28060.

<sup>2</sup> See the conversation of Joseph II with Sir R. M. Keith at Vienna, December 1785, on French designs on Egypt, as given in chap. xxv.

of Central America;<sup>1</sup> and the ill humour of the Court of Madrid lent some credit to persistent rumours of the formation of a Quadruple Alliance between Russia, Austria, France, and Spain, for the overthrow of England.

Having gained some knowledge of the chief players in the great game that was now opening, and of the vast issues at stake, we return to notice its varying fortunes, especially as they concerned Pitt. It should be remembered that, while the Marquis of Carmarthen wrote the despatches, the spirit which informed them was that of the Prime Minister. Carmarthen had ability, but it trickled off towards lampoons and plays. In *la haute politique* he never had very deep interest; but it is clear that Pitt soon found in it the fascination which has enthralled many a master mind.

As we have already seen, Joseph II early in 1785 led the way in two very threatening moves, namely, the proposal for the Belgic-Bavarian Exchange and the demand that the Dutch should cede to him Maestricht and throw open the navigation of the Scheldt estuary below Antwerp. It was characteristic of him that he should press both these disturbing claims in the same year, a fact which reveals his confidence in his alliances with Russia and France, and his contempt for the isolated Powers, Prussia, Holland, and Great Britain. In these two matters he used his allies as passive tools for the furtherance of his own ends; and this explains the concluding sentences of Harris's letter to Carmarthen quoted in part above: "The Emperor dupes Russia: France makes a fool of Prussia. In two words this seems to be the state of Europe. I wish England could take advantage of this singular position of affairs."

Pitt and his colleagues were by no means so absorbed in managing the House of Commons as Harris hinted in his letter of four days later to Joseph Ewart at Berlin. The despatches of this able official, Secretary of the British Legation at the Prussian capital, had already warned them of their danger, and pointed to an alliance with Prussia as the only way of escape. The once Prussophobe Harris admitted to Ewart the force of these arguments;<sup>2</sup> and, as Hertzberg, one of the Prussian Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, favoured an English connec-

<sup>1</sup> Salmon, "Pitt," 309, 310; also Martens, iv, 133 9, for the treaty closing this dispute.

<sup>2</sup> H.M. Add. MSS., 38020.

<sup>3</sup> "Malmesbury Memo.," ii, 113-21.

tion, there was some hope that the long feud between Frederick the Great and George III would die a natural death. During a visit to London in May, Harris drew up convincing arguments in favour of a Prussian alliance, and the King suggested that he should go to Berlin to arrange matters.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately the martinet of Sans Souci was as unbending as ever. He would not hear of entering into a general alliance with England, either because he still hankered after a union with France,<sup>2</sup> or feared that an *entente* with the islanders would drive France into close union with Russia and Austria. His resolve was the more remarkable because the Duke of York had been at Berlin to arrange the accession of Hanover to the League of German Princes which Frederick was then forming as a counterstroke to Joseph's assault on the Germanic System.<sup>3</sup> That the Prussian monarch should have neglected to strengthen that inherently weak union by the support of England, is one of the puzzles of his reign. Had he done so, the League would have taken a long stride forward towards the unification of Germany. Frederick chose otherwise. He welcomed Hanover and repulsed Great Britain. The League therefore lacked the support that it might have had. England and Prussia went their own ways, and therefore yielded to France the first place in the affairs of Western Europe, particularly in Holland. Moreover the Imperial Courts hotly resented the inclusion of Hanover in the League, as will presently appear.

George III very rarely, if ever, consulted Pitt concerning Hanoverian affairs, the control of which he shared solely with the Regency at Hanover.<sup>4</sup> But the accession of the Electorate to the *Fürstenthum*, which took definite shape in August 1785, was not the purely Germanic affair which George III strove to represent it. The incident gave deep umbrage to Joseph and Catharine; and their anger fell scarcely less on Frederick than on the Elector of Hanover. Vorontzoff, the Russian ambassador at London, on 5th August handed in a sharp protest, which Pitt at once forwarded to Windsor. It hinted that if George III did not annul his treaty with Prussia and Saxony, Russia would form alliances disagreeable to England. As appears in the

<sup>1</sup> "Leeds Mem.," 111-13.

<sup>2</sup> Wittichen, *op. cit.*, 8, 35 *et seq.*, and 173, 174; "Malmesbury Memoirs," 131.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>4</sup> Tomline, ii, 108; "Leeds Mem.," 116.

offence to the Imperial Courts, it would have been reasonable for them to bury the hatchet and come to a secret compact for mutual defence. Hanover, which had so long been the cause of alienation, should now have brought them to a close union. For this consummation Ewart had long been working. He it was who first caught a glimpse of the brilliant prospects which an Anglo-Prussian alliance would open up; and with his perservid Scottish nature (he was born at a manse near Kirkcudbright in 1759, the year of Pitt's birth) he set himself to win the confidence of the Prussian Minister, Count Hertzberg, and the respect of his chiefs at London. Possessing lively manners, a frank and pleasing address, natural shrewdness, perseverance, and zeal tempered with tact, he gradually won the confidence of Hertzberg, and saw him at least once, and often twice, every day. Thus he paved the way for a second proposal of a general alliance between England and Prussia. "*M. Ewart me tourmente beaucoup du plan*," wrote Hertzberg on 5th July to the Princess of Orange.<sup>1</sup> For the present he toiled in vain; but it is clear that the first conception of the Triple Alliance of England, Prussia, and Holland, originated neither with Pitt nor Carmarthen, nor Harris, nor Hertzberg, but with Ewart. His chief at Berlin, Lord Dalrymple, was in the main a figure-head of the British Embassy, and did not favour an Anglo-Prussian compact. But Ewart plodded on at the basis of the fabric, which Pitt and Harris were destined to complete. The services of this lonely and pertinacious Scot have not received due recognition.

The threats of the Czarina, however much they might be spurned at Windsor and Whitehall, furnished another reason why Pitt and Carmarthen should seek to come to some understanding with Prussia; but, having failed in the month of May,

<sup>1</sup> Calenbrander, iii, 16, quoted by Wittichen, 173.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ewart had been secretary to Sir John Stepany, then was Secretary of the Berlin Embassy in 1785-7. In 1788-91 he was ambassador. For Anglo-Prussian relations and Ewart's work, see Dr. Luckwaldt's excellent monograph, "*Die englisch-preussische Allianz von 1788*," 51 *et seq.* (Leipzig, 1902). By the kindness of General Sir Spencer Ewart, I was able to transcribe several of the letters of his forefather, Joseph Ewart. Some of them are published in an article in the "*Edinburgh Review*" for July 1909.

they were now warily on their guard. The feeling prevalent in diplomatic circles is piquantly expressed in Harris's letter of 23rd August to Carmarthen: "As for the King of Prussia if he is sincere, he will die; if not, he will of course deceive us; in both cases he should be used only as a tool, and, by being forced to speak out himself, compel others [*i.e.* Austria and Russia] to declare themselves."<sup>1</sup>

This passage probably explains why the Pitt Ministry, in sending Earl Cornwallis on an informal mission to Berlin, tied his hands by instructions of a stringent kind. Carmarthen on 2nd September cautioned the Earl not to commit this country in the slightest degree; and to hear much, but speak little to that "artful" monarch.

When such suspicions beset the interview, no good could result. On his side Frederick appears never to have taken the proposal seriously. He assured Cornwallis of his friendship for England, but remarked on the threatening state of things in Europe; France, Spain, Austria, and Russia were in alliance (which was false); Holland was in the power of France; Prussia and England were isolated, and, if united, were no match for the vast display of power opposed to them. The union between France and Austria was indissoluble (a very questionable statement in view of their opposing interests in the Netherlands); but it might be possible to arouse the jealousy of Catharine against Austria over the suggested partition of Turkey. As for France, she was seeking to make trouble for England everywhere, especially in India and Ireland. But he ended his jeremiad with praises of Pitt for his care of British finances. This tirade was evidently intended to discourage Pitt and to bring him as a suppliant for the alliance of Prussia. For if the Quadruple Alliance were a fact, what was to be gained by the two States remaining in isolation, especially as each of them had annoyed its neighbours? Frederick's real opinion appeared in the sharp rebuke which he sent to Count Lusi, his envoy at London, for venturing to suggest the desirability of an interview.<sup>2</sup>

The incident left the Pitt Ministry in worse straits than ever by revealing to all the world the friendless state of England. A note of anxiety may be detected in the letter which Pitt wrote to Harris on 13th October 1785. After referring to the

<sup>1</sup> Luckwaldt, 52, 53.

<sup>2</sup> "Cornwallis Corresp.," i, 202-11.

growing prosperity of the country, as enhancing its prestige, he added that he would say nothing about Dutch or continental politics—"for they seem in truth still too mysterious to form any conjectures on the turn either of them may ultimately take."<sup>1</sup> The words deserve notice; for they refute the notion that Pitt had formed any definite system.<sup>2</sup> His only plan at this time was to wait until the horizon cleared. Much may be said for this cautious opportunism; but it had the disadvantage of leaving us isolated at a time of great danger. We had done enough to incur the displeasure of two most dangerous sovereigns, Catharine and Joseph, but not enough to avert its probable consequences.

For the present, Ministers sought to recover the good will of Catharine. In semblance it was easily procurable. Vorontzoff for a time dangled before Carmarthen the prize of a Russian alliance, and sought to persuade him that the Empress was on the point of proposing it when she heard of Hanover joining the German League. The Austrian envoy, Kazeneck, also assured him that friendship with Russia would be the best means of preventing war with France. Carmarthen seems to have taken these offers at their face value and wrote to Harris that the road from London to Paris lay through Petersburg.<sup>3</sup> Similar proposals came from these envoys for some time; and Carmarthen cheered himself with a truly pathetic belief in their honesty.<sup>4</sup> Harris also, despite his knowledge of Catharine's anti-British bias, persisted in hoping for a return of her favour. He even drew up a memorandum recounting the advantages of an Anglo-Russo-Austrian League, for which Carmarthen was already angling; and in particular he deprecated any offer of alliance to Frederick, "unless compelled by events."<sup>5</sup> It is strange that

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," i, 157.

<sup>2</sup> I disagree with Herr Salomon ("Pitt") on this point. It seems to me that Pitt's policy was essentially tentative, and remained so up to the year 1788.

<sup>3</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28060. George III showed more sagacity than his Ministers, witness the phrase in his letter of 7th August to Pitt: "An experience of twenty years has taught me not to expect any return for the great assistance she [Catharine] has received from this country."

<sup>4</sup> As late as 5th February 1786 he wrote to Harris: "We are on more friendly terms with Russia than for a long time" (B.M. Add. MSS., 28061).

<sup>5</sup> I have published this Memorandum along with other documents bearing on the years 1785-7 in the "Eng. Hist. Rev." for 1909.

Pitt and Carmarthen did not see that the advances of the Imperial Courts were designed merely to keep England and Prussia apart. But, in truth, the fault lay mainly with Frederick the Great, whose spleen was incurable.

Meanwhile the course of events in the Netherlands should have brought Prussia and England to terms. They need not have been public, still less offensive in aim; for that would have brought about a close union of France with Russia as well as Austria, an event which Pitt no less than Frederick sought to avert. But why Pitt and Carmarthen should not have welcomed a secret defensive compact with Prussia it is hard to say. If the princes and counts of Germany did not hesitate to brave the wrath of Joseph by union with Prussia, why should Great Britain? Frederick's shiftiness may be granted. But at this crisis there was a motive which might be trusted to keep him staunch, namely, self-interest. Both England and Prussia sorely needed an ally; yet they held severely aloof.

In the early autumn of 1785, Joseph II brought severe pressure to bear upon the Dutch to cede Maestricht to him, and to throw open the navigation of the Scheldt below Antwerp. Hostilities were on the point of breaking out, when France skillfully intervened, offered her mediation, and prevailed on the disputants to accept the terms which she offered. By the Treaty of Fontainebleau (8 Nov. 1785) the Emperor agreed to waive his exorbitant claims in consideration of the payment of 15,000,000 florins, for the half of which sum the Court of Versailles became responsible. That so heavily burdened a State should add to its financial difficulties excited some surprise; but in the political sphere Vergennes gained a signal triumph. By becoming paymaster to Joseph, he kept that wayward ruler in French leading strings; and, by saving Maestricht and the Scheldt navigation to the Dutch, he ensured the supremacy of France in that land. This compact was followed two days later by a Franco-Dutch treaty of alliance whereby the Court of Versailles guaranteed the possessions of the United Provinces; and each of the two States undertook to furnish ships and men to the other in case of attack.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Pitt awoke to a sense of the danger, and urged Harris to use his utmost endeavours (short of an open breach

<sup>1</sup> Gardes, "Traité," v, 60-72.

with France) to prevent the ratification of the treaty by the United Provinces. All that the envoy could do was to present to the States General at The Hague a Memorial declaring the continued interest taken by England in the affairs of the Republic. But of what avail was this academic statement without a conditional and secret offer of armed support, which everybody knew France would give rather than forego her triumph? Again, early in December, Pitt warned Carmarthen that Harris should "redouble every possible effort" to prevent the Franco-Dutch alliance.<sup>1</sup> This was merely to bid him fight with his hands tied.

France now held a most commanding position in Europe. By the new compacts she influenced Hapsburg policy, she forced Frederick the Great into almost abject deference, she allured Catharine, and she controlled the Dutch Netherlands. This last triumph crowned the life-work of Vergennes. The recent treaties relieved him from the disagreeable alternative of choosing between Austria and the United Provinces in case of a rupture. They emphasized the isolation of England. Above all, they prepared the way for joint action of the French and Dutch East India Companies which might prove to be fatal to British ascendancy in India.<sup>2</sup>

The meagre correspondence of Pitt at this time contains scarcely a reference to this very serious crisis. His letters turn mainly on finance, Irish affairs, and domestic topics such as the purchase of Holwood. On the Dutch problem there is not a word except the curiously curt reference in his letter of October 6 to Grenville: "I have written to Lord Carmarthen on the Dutch business much as you seem to wish."<sup>3</sup> The phrase is interesting as marking the commencement of the influence which Grenville was soon to gain over Pitt in foreign affairs; but its nonchalance is astounding. In part, no doubt, the passivity of the Prime Minister resulted from the determination of George III to hold aloof as King of England from all complications, how-

<sup>1</sup> "Mahuesbury Diaries," II, 175.

<sup>2</sup> On 7th March 1786 Harris reported to Carmarthen joint actions of the Dutch and French in the East, and that eight Dutch warships were to sail thither with troops on board. (H.M. Add. MSS., 28001.) The possession of the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch rendered our communications with India precarious.

<sup>3</sup> "Drapmour P.," I, 258.



ever much, as Elector of Hanover, he might irritate Austria and Russia. As we shall see in the next chapter, George was beginning to be alarmed at the growing expenses of his family, and viewed the Dutch crisis mainly as involving burdensome demands on the Civil List. Here, then, as at so many points in his career, Pitt was handicapped by the King.

But it is also probable that in the disappointing year 1785, marked by the failure of his Reform and Irish measures, he suppressed the concern which he must have felt at the deepening isolation of England. We must remember that he had formed a resolve to play a waiting game in foreign affairs. On August 8 he wrote to the Duke of Rutland that, if the commercial treaty with Ireland became law, and peace lasted for five years, England would be able to look any Power in Europe in the face.<sup>1</sup> That explains why he tied the hands of Harris at The Hague and sent to Berlin overtures so cautious as to be received with polite disdain. His great aim was to lessen the National Debt; and the year 1785, with all its disappointments, witnessed a most extraordinary rise in Consols, viz. from 54½ to 73½. There was the strength of England's position. If she reduced her debt, while all the Continental Powers were ruinously increasing theirs, she must have the advantage when turmoil ended in war.

Pitt therefore adopted a policy of delay. So long as he could strengthen the navy, maintain the army at the ordinary peace footing, and enhance the nation's credit, he was content to bide his time, leaving Harris to combat French influence in Holland as best he could.<sup>2</sup> Such a policy was very far from brilliant; and, had not France in the next two years entered on a period of rapid decline, he might be censured for tamely waiting on events. For it is possible that a bold initiative at Whitehall in October, while Vergennes' Dutch treaties were taking shape, might have gained active support either from Prussia or from Joseph II, who had been on very cool terms with France. Pitt, however, preferred to hold back, even though the Bourbons gained control of the United Provinces. By his passivity in face of that diplomatic disaster we may measure his devotion to the cause of peace. And just as Queen Elizabeth often reassured her people at the gravest crisis by displays of frivolity, so too Pitt's absorption in tree planting at Holwood

<sup>1</sup> "Pitt-Rutland Corresp.," 111.

<sup>2</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 172.

may have been a device for hiding his anxiety, reassuring the public, and preventing a fall in the Funds.

Serene hopefulness in the future of his country is a strong feature in the character of this great man; and we shall find occasions when he displayed this quality to excess. Certain it is that he never lost hope or relaxed his energies, even now, when Ministers and envoys evinced signs of gloom or despair. A proof of the prevalence of these feelings appears in one of the closing passages of a Memorandum which the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance, on 30th December 1785, sent to his colleague, Carmarthen. It was written owing to a singular circumstance, which reveals the impulsiveness of Pitt. The Duke had almost casually suggested the desirability of recovering some foothold in the Dutch Netherlands by inducing them to propose to include England in their recent treaty with France. This hint, which the Duke threw out in conversation, was at once taken up by Pitt, who, without consulting the Cabinet, urged Carmarthen to take steps to carry it into effect, and suggested that one of the Patriots might be bribed to make the proposal of including England, as if it were to test the sincerity of her offers of friendship. Of course the matter came to nothing; but the surprise of the Duke at Pitt's speedy adoption of the hint led him to descant on our isolation, and to harp on the well worn theme of an alliance with Austria:

Goodwood, December 30, 1785.

... If the Emperor and France keep well together, Leghorn will be also an inimical port,<sup>1</sup> as may Algiers and Morocco if their treaties with Spain go on. Holland seems lost to us both in Europe and the East Indies; and should the Emperor and Russia unite with France, Sweden must follow, and Denmark dare not be our friend. Under such circumstances what are we to look for but utter ruin! If France is disengaged on the Continent and assisted by Spain, Holland and Russia (to say nothing of America), we must be attacked with greatly superior forces in the East and West Indies and perhaps in Canada; but, what is still worse, we shall undoubtedly have the war brought into Ireland, and I very much doubt whether we can by any means avoid that country being divided, and a large part acting against us. If any of these points of attack succeed, and above all, if our navy should meet with any disaster from superior forces, the next step will be to bring the war into

<sup>1</sup> The Grand-Duke of Tuscany was a Hapsburg prince.

this country, and the best issue of such an event must be attended with much distress. In short, the natural and political advantages of France are such that *I very much fear the consequences*. To divert her attention by stirring up some powerful enemy on the Continent has been long and universally considered as our only resource, and yet unfortunately we seem to be obstructing the only Power capable of creating that diversion, which is the Emperor. . . .<sup>1</sup>

It was amidst fears so intense and prejudices so deep-seated that Pitt undertook the negotiations for a friendly commercial treaty with France which is the chief event of the year 1786.

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 332.

## CHAPTER XIV

### L'ENTENTE CORDIALE

(1786)

Thy father's fame with thine fair Truth shall blend.  
His vigour saved from foreign foes the land,  
Thy prudence makes each foreign foe a friend.

REV. W. MASON TO PITT, 1786.

THE nation is but the family writ large; and, just as families after a ruinous quarrel sometimes win their way back towards prudence and friendliness, so too nations now and again feel the force of the sociable instincts. Such a time was now at hand for Great Britain and France. The eight years of the American War of Independence had increased the debt of the Island Power by £115,000,000;<sup>1</sup> and so wasteful had been the conduct of the war by France that in the years 1778-1783, she had exceeded the total of her already large peace expenditure by £66,000,000.<sup>2</sup> Further, as that struggle brought to her few results beyond the satisfaction of rending the British Empire in twain, she was scarcely the better for it. In truth, while defeat led patriotic Britons to tread the humble paths of retrenchment and reform, the triumph of France allured her politicians into the stately avenues ending in bankruptcy and Revolution.

During the period of war, philosophy, science, and industry had been waging their peaceful campaigns; and now in the exhaustion or quiescence which beset both peoples, the still small voice of reason was heard. The responsiveness of thought in England and France is one of the most remarkable facts in the eighteenth century. Though political rivalry had five times over embroiled those peoples in deadly strife, yet their thinkers had

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cunningham, "Eng. Industry and Commerce" (pt. ii, 546).

<sup>2</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28063. Eden to Carnarthen, 10th January 1788.

never ceased to feel the thrill of sympathetic ideas, originally by "the natural enemy," which proved to be no less potent than the divisive forces of statecraft. The Marconigrams of thought pass through storms, whether atmospheric or political; and may be that finally the nations will become sounding-board, responding more and more to progressive ideas, and less at least to the passions of mankind.

Certainly the mental sympathy of England and France in the century was strongly marked. As is well known, the philosophy of Locke supplied Voltaire and Rousseau with most of the weapons of their intellectual armoury. From the English constitution Montesquieu drew many of the contentions which lent significance to his *Esprit des Lois*. The ideas of naturalism and sensibility were wafted hither from the garner of Rousseau. Philanthropy became a force in both lands about the same time, but in diverse ways. In France it was in the main anti-clerical, springing from the indignant protests of Voltaire against atrocities such as that inflicted by the Church on Calas. In this land it may be traced to the Wesleyan revival, the motive which impelled Howard, Clarkson, and Wilberforce being distinctly religious.

On a lower plane we notice the immense vogue of English fashions in France, and of French modes in England. *French seigneurs* sought to copy our field sports, swathed themselves in English *redingotes*, and rose in the stirrups of *P. Anglaise*. The Duc de Chartres (the future Philippe Egalité) set the rage for English ways and fabrics, so that French industries seriously suffered. In 1785 the French Minister complained to our envoy that French draperies could not be sold unless they looked like English stuffs.<sup>1</sup> Biltons returned the compliment. The swarmed into France. We find our envoy complaining the English families were settling in every French town, so that might be well to devise an absentee tax which would drive them homewards.<sup>2</sup>

But no influence helped on the new cosmopolitanism so much as the spread of ideas of Free Trade. Here the honours lie with French thinkers. It was by residence in France and contact with the *Economistes*, Quesnay and Turgot, that Adam Smith was able to formulate the ideas soon to be embodied in the

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

"Wealth of Nations." Here we may note a curious paradox. The practical islanders supplied their neighbours with political ideas which, when barbed by Voltaire and Rousseau, did much to gall France into violent action. On the other hand, the more nimble-witted people gave to its trading rival the fiscal principles (neglected at home) which furthered the extension of its commerce. Venomous use might be made of this contrast by that fast diminishing band of Anglophobes who see in all British actions perfidious attempts to ruin France; but it must be remembered that everything depends on the men who introduce and apply the new ideas, and that, whereas France was unfortunate in the men who promulgated and worked the political principles learnt in England, the islanders on the contrary had the wisest of counsellors. Contrast Voltaire, Rousseau, and Robespierre with Adam Smith and Pitt, and the riddle is solved at once.

Amidst the exhaustion of war, both nations were now ready to listen to all that was most convincing in the arguments of the *Economistes* and of Adam Smith. These exponents of the nascent science of Economics rendered a memorable service to the cause of peace by urging nations, like sensible traders, to rejoice in the prosperity of their neighbours, not in their poverty. Propinquity, said they, should be an incentive to free intercourse, not to hatred. Adam Smith pointed out in his "Wealth of Nations" (1776) that France could offer us a market eight times as populous as that of our North American colonies, and twenty-four times as advantageous if the frequency of the returns were reckoned. The British market, he said, would be equally profitable to France. He laughed to scorn the notion that France would always drain Great Britain of her specie, and showed that the worship of the "balance of trade" was accountable for much folly and bloodshed.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to say whether these views had much hold on the English people. If we may judge from the passions aroused by Pitt's Irish Resolutions, it was slight. On the other hand the absence of any vehement opposition to the commercial treaty with France a year later, shows either that public opinion here was moving forwards, or that the Opposition felt it impossible to bring to bear on the absolute government of Louis XVI those irritating arguments which had had so potent an influence on the Irish people.

<sup>1</sup> "Wealth of Nations," bk. iv, ch. iii.

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The influence of the *Economistes* in France probably did not count for very much. But they had shown their power during the brief but beneficent ministry of Turgot; and even when Marie Antoinette procured the dismissal of that able but austere Minister, one of his disciples remained in office, and was now *Minister of Foreign Affairs*. This was Vergennes. Few men at that time did more for the cause of human brotherhood than this man, whom Carlyle described as "solid phlegmatic . . . like some dull punctual clerk." A man's importance depends, after all, not so much on external brilliance as on the worth of his achievements; a statesman who largely decided the Franco-American alliance, the terms of peace in 1783, and the resumption of friendly relations with England, need not fear the verdict of history. In a little known fragment written in April 1776, Vergennes thus outlines an intelligent policy:

Wise and happy will that nation be which will be the first to adapt its policy to the new circumstances of the age, and to consent to see in its colonies nothing more than allied provinces and no longer subject States of the mother-land. Wise and happy will that nation be which is the first to be convinced that commercial policy consists wholly in employing lands in the way most advantageous for the owners, also the arms of the people in the most useful way, that is, as self-interest will enjoin if there is no coercion; and that all the rest is only illusion and vanity. When the total separation of America [from Great Britain] has forced everybody to recognize this truth and weaned the European nations from commercial jealousy, it will remove one important cause of war, and it is difficult not to desire an event which ought to bring this boon to the human race.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, when France drew the sword on behalf of the Americans, Britons naturally scoffed at these philanthropic pretensions. The conduct of her Court and nobles was certainly open to the charge of hypocrisy, especially when Louis XVI issued the ordinance of 1781 restricting the higher commissions in his army to those nobles who could show sixteen quarters of nobility. Singular, indeed, to battle for democracy in the new world and yet draw tighter the bands of privilege in France! Yet Vergennes, Necker, and other friends of reform were not responsible for this regal folly; and they were doubtless sincere

<sup>1</sup> "Politique de tous les Cabinets de l'Europe . . .," ii, 402-3. It contains some "Mémoires" of Vergennes.

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hoping that the downfall of England's colonial system would inaugurate a new era in the politics and commerce of the world. A proof of the sincerity of Vergennes is to be found in the 11th Article of the Treaty of Versailles (1783), which stipulated that, immediately after the ratification of the treaty, commissioners should be appointed to prepare new commercial arrangements between the two nations "on the basis of reciprocity and mutual convenience, which arrangements are to be initiated and concluded within the space of two years from the 1st of January 1784." For this clause Lords Shelburne and Fox on the British side were chiefly responsible; and it is certain that the former warmly approved it.<sup>1</sup> Pitt, as Chancellor of the Exchequer in that Ministry, doubtless also welcomed the proposal; but I have found no sign of his opinions on the subject. The credit for this enlightened proposal may probably be assigned to Vergennes, seeing that he dictated terms, while the British Cabinet accepted them. There is a ring of sincerity in his words written on 1st February 1783 to de Rayneval, then a diplomatic agent in London: "It is an old prejudice, which I do not share, that there is a natural incompatibility between these two peoples. . . . Every nation must strive for the utmost prosperity; but this cannot be based on exclusiveness, otherwise it would be a nullity. One does not get rich from very few nations."<sup>2</sup> This seems to be an echo of Adam Smith's return: "A nation that would enrich itself by foreign trade is certainly most likely to do so when its neighbours are all rich, industrious, and commercial nations."<sup>3</sup>

Statesmen on this side of the Channel were slower than their counterparts in seeking to realize these enlightened aims. The fall of Shelburne's Ministry and the triumph of the Fox-North Coalition led to no important change in the Treaty, which was signed at Versailles in September 1783; but the commercial treaty was shelved for the present. With all his enlightenment in matters political, Fox had a limited outlook in the commercial sphere. He held the old Whig views, which for well-nigh a century had been narrowly national and mercantilist. Further, he hotly contested the claim put forward by the French

<sup>1</sup> Fitzmaurice, "Shelburne," iii, 260.

<sup>2</sup> "Précis du Traité de Commerce de 1786," by Count H. de Butenval (Paris, 1869), 25.

<sup>3</sup> "Wealth of Nations," bk. iv, ch. iii.



Government to consider all trading arrangements at an end, including those of the Treaty of Utrecht, if no arrangement were formed before the end of the year 1785.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the state of things when Pitt and Carmarthen took office at the close of the year 1783. The events described in the previous chapter will have enabled the reader to understand the need of great caution on the part of Pitt. Though the language of Vergennes was redolent of human brotherhood, his actions were often shrewdly diplomatic. In the United Provinces, as we have seen, his policy wore a twofold aspect. While supporting the Patriots, he claimed to be supporting the cause of democracy, but he also dealt a blow at British influence. Though he maintained the Austrian alliance, he coquetted with Prussia; and, while dallying with the Czarina in order to keep out England, he made a profitable bargain with Russia's enemy, Sweden, respecting Gothenburg. Thus on all sides he advanced the cause of enlightenment and the interests of France.

It is not surprising that this dextrous union of philosophy and statecraft (which resembles that by which Napoleon utilized Rousseau's advocacy of natural boundaries) earned the hatred of nearly every Briton. Carmarthen and Harris were deeply imbued with these feelings; and it is certain that Pitt, while taking the outstretched hand of Vergennes, had expected a dagger-thrust. We find Grenville writing to Carmarthen on 25th February 1785 concerning a plan, which Pitt had formed, for provisionally buying over a Mr. D. S. M. at Paris to send confidential news, especially respecting the plans and movements of the French in the East Indies. He was to receive 60 guineas a month for news sent to Daniel Hailes, Secretary at the British Embassy, and 250 guineas at the end of three months if his information gave satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> Other items make it clear that Pitt viewed with concern the activity of France in the East. The formation of a French East India Company in March 1785 was a threatening sign;<sup>3</sup> and in the summer came a report from Sir Robert Ainslie, British ambassador at Constantinople, that France was intriguing to gain a foothold

<sup>1</sup> Buteval, 23.

<sup>2</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 2866a.

<sup>3</sup> "F. O.," France, 14, Dorset to Carmarthen, 31st March 1785. See, too, L. Pongaud Choiseul-Gouffier, "La France en Orient sous Louis XVI" (Paris, 1887).

in Egypt on the Red Sea. Part of his despatch of 23rd July 1785 is worth quoting:

... The Porte has varied in her general opposition to establishing a trade through Egypt, by opening the navigation of the Red Sea to the flag of Christian Powers. The present undertaking and the late French mission to Cairo was in consequence of a plan devised by the late French ambassador to ruin our East India Company by an illicit trade under the protection of France, in which it was thought the Company's servants would join most heartily. It is clear that France adopted this scheme, but I can pledge myself the Porte was not consulted and that she will never protect a project by far more dangerous to her own interests than even to ours. It seems Count Pâris hoped to elude the Ottoman bad humour by employing the navigation of the flags of all Christian Powers indiscriminately and to secure his trade by the protection of the Beys of Egypt, who certainly have aimed at absolute independence ever since the time of Ali Bey.<sup>1</sup>

The correspondence of Sir James Harris with Carmarthen shows that our Ministry kept a watchful eye on any symptoms which portended a union of the Dutch East India Company with that of France. Indeed, as we shall see, the reasons which prompted the resolute action of Pitt at the crisis of 1787 in Holland were largely based on naval and colonial considerations. Matters in the East were in an uneasy state. Once again, in January 1786, Hailes reported that the unsettled state of Egypt was known to be attracting the notice of the French Foreign Office, probably with a view to conquest.<sup>2</sup> The efforts which France put forth in 1785-6 for the construction of a great naval fortress at Cherbourg also claimed attention; and Britons were not calmed by the philosophic reflections of some peace-loving Gauls that the completion of that mighty harbour would render it impossible for England to make war on France.

In view of the lowering political horizon, is it surprising that Pitt was very cautious in responding to the proposals of the French Cabinet for a friendly commercial treaty? It is incorrect to say, as Harris did in a rather peevish outburst, that Pitt was too occupied with Parliament to attend to foreign affairs.<sup>3</sup> We now know that he paid much attention to them,

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 333. Hailes to Fraser, 26th January 1786.

<sup>3</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," li, 112.

though the pressing problems of finance, India, Ireland, and Reform perforce held the first place in his thoughts. But he must have desired to gain a clearer insight into a very complex situation before he committed his country to a commercial treaty with France.<sup>1</sup> To have done so prematurely might have prevented the formation of that closer political union with Russia and Austria which British statesmen long and vainly struggled to effect.

But another motive probably weighed even more with Pitt in favour of delay. We have seen how fondly and tenaciously he clung to the hope of a commercial union between Great Britain and Ireland through the session of 1784. Surely it was of prime importance to complete the fiscal system of the British Islands before he entered into negotiations with a foreign Power. To have hurried on the French commercial treaty before that with Ireland was concluded would have been a grave tactical error. As a firm economic unit, Great Britain and Ireland could hope for far better terms from France than as separate entities, and this consideration almost certainly supplies the reason for Pitt's extreme anxiety to assure the industrial unity of these islands before he began to bargain with France, while it may also explain the desire of Vergennes to press on the negotiation before the British Islands had acquired fiscal solidarity. In fine, everything conspired to impose on Pitt a passive attitude. Vergennes, as the victor, could propose terms; Pitt, representing the beaten Power, could only await them. Such was the situation in 1784-5. An autocracy founded on privilege seemed to be threatening our political existence, and yet made commercial proposals which might have come from Adam Smith himself.

The British Government responded to them very slowly. In the spring of 1784 it appointed George Crauford to act as our commissioner at Versailles for the drafting of a commercial arrangement, as was required by the treaty of 1763, but he did not receive his instructions until September. Rayneval, who had the full confidence of Vergennes, was the French commissioner; and at their first interview he asked that the principle of reciprocity should form the basis of the negotiations. To this the British Court demurred, and the affair remained in suspense for some months. On 3rd March 1785 Crauford wrote to Car-

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," II, 157.

Carthagen that he was still waiting for replies to his notes of 30th September and 25th November, and that Vergennes had repeatedly expressed to the Duke of Dorset, the British ambassador, his annoyance at the loss of time. His resentment had recently taken a tangible form; he had issued an ordinance (*arrêté*) imposing a tax of sixty per cent. on all carriages imported from the United Kingdom. This action led Carthagen to break his long silence on commercial matters and to protest against the tax as tending to "prevent that spirit of conciliation and friendly liberality so necessary at this time to produce any good effect for those commercial arrangements now in contemplation."<sup>1</sup> He also hinted that Great Britain might with perfect justice retaliate. Further, he repudiated the French claim, once again raised, that all commercial arrangements would lapse by the end of 1785, and maintained that the Treaty of Utrecht would afterwards equally be in force. After further delays Rayneval demanded that there should be absolute reciprocity in all commercial dealings, the basis of the most favoured nation being adopted where it did not infringe existing treaties. To this Carthagen sent the following reply on 5th August:

Mutual benefits and reciprocal advantages are indisputably the objects we are inclined to pursue in the adjustment of this business; but to say at once that the two nations shall be entitled to those privileges which are alone allowed to the most favoured nations, by way of amends to the negotiation and without weighing the nature and convenience of such privileges is totally impossible; and of this I think M. de Rayneval must be convinced when he recollects that it was a stipulation of this sort contained in the 8th and 9th articles of the Treaty of Commerce of Utrecht in 1713 that prevented those articles from ever being carried into effect.<sup>2</sup>

Considering that reciprocity and the most favoured nation treatment had been urged by Rayneval at his first interview with Carthagen in September 1784, it is difficult to see why Carthagen was hurried by the present proposal.

Meanwhile Vergennes had struck another heavy blow. He issued an *arrêté* forbidding foreigners to share in the French trade with the Barbary States, and on 10th July he prohibited the import

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* The British Parliament in 1716 abrogated these clauses in favour of earlier and less liberal arrangements. Louis XIV consented to this.

of foreign cottons, muslins, gauzes, and linens into France. At once there arose a cry of distress and rage throughout Great Britain; and Carmarthen sent an energetic remonstrance against this further proof of the ill-humour of the French Government. Hailes at once informed him that the two *arrêts* had "been suspended with more forbearance than could reasonably have been expected, considering the detriment French manufactures have sustained, and the great advantage we have derived from the balance of trade being so much and so long in our favour. People in general think that this strong measure will hasten the conclusion of an arrangement between us."<sup>1</sup> Vergennes soon assured Hailes of his desire for a friendly arrangement, but he added that meanwhile the French Government had to look to its own needs and stop the enormous influx of British goods, for which the French public clamoured. Commerce and finance were then the chief care of the French Government. On 25th August Hailes reported the pains secretly taken by the French to attract skilled English workmen. On 22nd September Craufurd stated that further disagreeable events would happen unless some progress were made with the commercial treaty; Rayneval observed that, if we objected to reciprocity and the most favoured nation basis, it was for us to make a proposal. On 21st October Vergennes issued another unfriendly *arrêt* prohibiting the import of iron, steel, and cutlery; but Hailes continued to assure Carmarthen that Vergennes and Rayneval were anxious for a final settlement and that the *arrêts* were "meant to stimulate us to a conclusion of the commercial treaty as soon as possible."<sup>2</sup>

Pitt now began to bestir himself on this matter. In order to have at Paris a commissioner abler, or more acceptable, than Craufurd seems to have been, he made overtures to William Eden (the future Lord Auckland) with a view to his acting as special commissioner in his place. In the Auckland Papers at the British Museum there is an unpublished letter of Pitt to Eden, dated Brighthelmston, 16th October 1785, in answer to one in which Eden had hinted that he would prefer the Speakership of the House of Commons, as Cornwall

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 16. Hailes to Carmarthen, 4th August 1785.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Hailes to Carmarthen, 1st December 1785. The Chambers of Commerce at Paris, Versailles, and Montpellier protested against the *arrêts*. See Butenval, *op. cit.*, 36.

"obviously suffered while in the chair."<sup>1</sup> Pitt's reply is as follows:

It gives me great satisfaction to find that there remains no obstacle to your acceptance of either of the situations mentioned in my letter to Mr. Heresford, and that nothing seems left to settle but the mode of carrying such an arrangement into effect. I confess I am not aware of any means which could properly be taken to induce the Speaker to retire at present; and therefore in the interval I should very much wish to accelerate the execution of the other idea.<sup>2</sup>

Pitt then refers to some difficulties which make it desirable to defer the actual appointment until the session had begun. He suggests conferences, especially as in a fortnight he would be nearer to Eden. All this bespeaks a degree of nonchalance quite remarkable considering the importance of the questions at stake. Everything tends to show that Pitt felt far less interest in this negotiation than in that with Ireland, to which he had very properly given the first place. The effort to free trade between the two islands having now failed, there was no reason for further postponing the discussions with France.

Such seems to me the reasonable way of explaining his procedure. The contention of the French historian of this treaty, that Pitt was opposed to the commercial arrangement with France, and was only forced into it by the hostile *arrêt*, is untenable.<sup>3</sup> He maintains that it was the last *arrêt*, that of 21st October, which brought Pitt to his senses. "Mr. Pitt, who did not *then* wish for war, surrendered." This phrase reveals the prejudice of the writer, who, publishing his work at the time of Cobden's negotiations with Napoleon III, obviously set himself to prove that Free Trade was French both in the origin of the idea and in the carrying out in practice by statesmen. Passing over these claims, we should remember that Pitt had made his first overtures to Eden in the first week in October, some ten days before the appearance of the *arrêt*, which, in Butenval's version, compelled him to "surrender."

Pitt acted with much circumspection. He urged Eden to collect information on trade matters; but it seems that not until December did the new Council of Trade set on foot any official

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 110. Eden to Pitt, 12th October 1785. See, too, "Carlisle Papers," 644.

<sup>2</sup> H.M. Add. MSS., 34420.

<sup>3</sup> Butenval, 39.

inquiries.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the Irish negotiation, which was hurried on too fast, had given him pause. Meanwhile, however, France had gained another success by imposing her mediation on the Emperor Joseph II and the Dutch Government and settling the disputes between them. As appeared in the previous chapter, this treaty led to the conclusion of an alliance (10th November 1785) both political and commercial, with the United Provinces, which emphasized the isolation of England and secured the Dutch markets for France. Thus the delay in meeting the advances of Vergennes had been doubly prejudicial to British interests, and it must be confessed that Pitt's *début* in European diplomacy was far from brilliant.

If, however, we look into details, we find that Carmarthen hampered the negotiations at the outset by refusing to accept the "most favoured nation" basis of negotiation, and by throwing on France the responsibility for not proposing some "practicable" scheme. On 14th October 1785 he wrote to Hallett that Great Britain very much desired a commercial treaty with France, and was waiting for "specific proposals" from her; and again, on 4th November, that matters seemed hopeless, owing to Rayneval's obstinate adherence to his original scheme.<sup>2</sup> This pedantic conduct was fast enclosing the whole affair in a vicious circle. Meanwhile the sands of time were running out: and it seemed that England would be left friendless and at the mercy of any commercial arrangement which France chose to enforce after the close of the year. It is strange that Pitt did not insist on the furtherance of a matter which he judged to be "of great national importance."<sup>3</sup> But his only step for the present was to write a letter, signed by Carmarthen, asking for an extension of time beyond the end of that year. In reply Vergennes expressed the satisfaction of Louis XVI that Great Britain was seriously desirous of framing a commercial treaty and granted six months' extension of time.<sup>4</sup> A year was finally granted.

Notwithstanding this further proof of Vergennes' good will, the negotiation began under conditions so unfavourable to Great Britain as to call for a skilled negotiator; but the career of

<sup>1</sup> Carmarthen to Eden, 9th December 1785 (H.M. Add. MSS., 14420).

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 333.

<sup>3</sup> Pitt to Eden, 4th December 1785, in "Auckland Journals," i, 87.

<sup>4</sup> Vergennes to Carmarthen, 14th December 1785, in Pitt MSS., 333.

William Eden warranted the hope that he would bear the burden of responsibility triumphantly. Born in 1744, and educated at Eton and Christchurch, he early showed marked abilities, which were sharpened by practice at the Bar. He also devoted his attention to social and economic questions; and when, in 1780, he became Chief Secretary for Ireland under the Earl of Carlisle, he did much to promote the prosperity of that land, especially by helping to found the Bank of Ireland. He took keen interest in the treatment of prisoners, and proposed to substitute hard labour for transportation. The reform of the penal laws also engaged his attention. He had long been attached to Lord North's party, though his views were more progressive than theirs. By his marriage with the sister of Sir Gilbert Elliot he came into touch with the Whigs; and, though his petulant conduct in 1782 with regard to the resignation of the lord-lieutenancy by Carlisle caused general annoyance, he was largely instrumental in bringing about the Fox-North Coalition. Consistency sat lightly upon Eden; and when, in 1785, he hotly opposed Pitt's Irish proposals, similar in effect to his own of some years earlier, he was roundly abused by one of his friends for his factiousness.<sup>1</sup> The same correspondent soon had cause to upbraid him still further for his conduct in the autumn of 1785, when, leaving the Opposition, he went over to the Government side in order to act as special commissioner at Paris. The Duke of Portland coldly commended him for placing country above party; but the many saw in the move only enlightened self-interest and felt no confidence in him. Wrasall expressed the prevalent opinion when he said that there "existed in Eden's physiognomy, even in his manner and deportment, something which did not convey the impression of plain dealing or inspire confidence."<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly Eden was the ablest negotiator whom Pitt could have chosen for a difficult commercial bargain; Wedgwood at once wrote to say that he would have been his choice; and the remarks as to Pitt filching away a prominent member of the Opposition are clearly prompted by spite. After hearing much evidence on commercial matters at the Committee of Council, Eden set out for Paris at the end of March 1786, and was welcomed by Vergennes as a kindred soul. The Duke of Dorset

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 34420. Letter of John Lee, 1st April 1785.

<sup>2</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 89; Wrasall, iv, 229.



was somewhat offended at his coming, and held aloof. Fortunately he found it desirable to take a long holiday in England, during which time the affairs of the embassy were ably carried on by Eden and Hailes. A popular song of the day referred to this in the lines:

For Dorset at cricket can play  
And leave Billy Eden in France, an.

Dorset's services were, in fact, mainly social. He was liked by Marie Antoinette; and his *thés d'amants* were frequented by the leading nobles.<sup>1</sup>

On Eden, then, and Pitt (for Carmarthen felt no trust in the French) lay the chief burden of the negotiations. It is clear that Pitt now took a keen interest in the affair; and as Vergennes, Rayneval, and Calonne (Minister of Finance) showed a marked desire to come to a fair compromise, the matter was soon in good train. The chief difficulties arose from the suspicions of Carmarthen and the desire of Jenkinson, head of the Council of Trade, to drive a hard bargain with France. Pitt could not be indifferent to the opinions of his colleagues; and his experience of British manufacturers was such as to make him press for the best possible terms. That he still felt some distrust of the Court of Versailles is clear from his letter of 19th April 1786 to Eden that their financial embarrassments were such as "to secure, at least for a time, a sincere disposition to peace."<sup>2</sup> By that time, too, he must have received Eden's letter of 13th April marked

"Private and confidential," which referred in glowing terms to the prospects of the negotiation.

It is a circumstance which I shall think a just subject of pride to us both in the present age and of merit with posterity if the result should be what at this moment seems probable. . . . France shows a disposition to encourage our trade if we remove the senseless and preposterous distinctions which fill so many lines in our Book of Rates; and a decided resolution to obstruct it as much as possible if those distinctions are suffered to remain. In the same time all the speculations and exertions of our trade with this Kingdom are suspended, and the manufactures, the navigation and the revenue are suffering. Besides, all the trading

<sup>1</sup> J. Flammermont, "Correspondances des Agents diplomatiques étrangers avant la Révolution," 508.

<sup>2</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 106.

and manufacturing parts of England are at this hour disposed to go much greater lengths than are now suggested. . . . It is even highly possible that this treaty may form a new epoch in history.<sup>1</sup>

Over against the enthusiasm of Eden we may set the distrust of Carmarthen, as evinced in his statement to that envoy on 29th April, that if France could ever be sincere, Eden would doubtless bring the bargain to a successful issue.<sup>2</sup> Far less complimentary were his references to Eden in private letters to Dorset and Harris. From the former he inquired: "How is our paragon of perfection relished in France?"<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Harris, who constantly maintained that Eden was playing the game for Versailles, not for London, Carmarthen referred to "the absurd and officious letter of our great commercial negotiator."<sup>4</sup> It is well to remember these jealousies; for, as Harris was the bosom friend of Carmarthen, he succeeded in persuading him that the whole negotiation with France was a trick of our arch-enemy. The letter of Harris, which called forth Carmarthen's ironical reply, ended with the statement that France sought "to depress us everywhere, to keep us in an isolated and unconnected state, till such time as they think they can cripple us irrecoverably by an open hostile attack."<sup>5</sup> These suspicions must have been passed on to Pitt after due sifting; and it speaks much for the evenness and serenity of his mind that he persevered with the negotiation in spite of the prejudices of his Foreign Minister. Naturally, also, he kept the affair in his own hands.

In truth, Pitt occupied a position intermediate between that of the incurably suspicious Carmarthen and of the pleased and rather self-conscious Eden. When the latter very speedily arrived at a preliminary agreement, or *Projet*, with Rayneval, and begged that it should be adopted as speedily, and with as few alterations as possible, Pitt subjected it to friendly but close scrutiny. His reply of 10th May has been printed among the Auckland Journals; but his criticisms were even more practical in a long letter of 26th May, which is among the Pitt Papers. The following sentences are of special interest:

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 110. I quote fully only from those letters which have not been published.

<sup>2</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 112.

<sup>3</sup> H.M. Add. MSS., 28061. Letter of 19th May 1786.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Letter of 14th December 1786.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

The Principles on which the *Projet* is founded are undoubtedly those on which it is to be wished that this business may be finally concluded, both as they tend to the mutual advantage of the two Countries in their commercial intercourse, and as they include the abolition of useless and injurious distinctions. But on the fullest consideration it has not appeared to His Majesty's servants that it would be proper to advise the immediate conclusion of a treaty on the footing of that *Projet* without some additions to it which may tend to give a more certain and permanent effect to these principles . . . In addition to this, the *Projet*, as it now stands affords no security that general prohibitions or prohibitory duties may not at any time take place in either Country to the exclusion of whatever may happen to be the chief articles of trade from the other. It is true that the same motives which should guide both parties in the present negotiation might for a long time prevent their adopting a conduct so contrary to the spirit of the proposed agreement. But it cannot be the wish of either Court to trust to this security only. We ought by all the means in our power to remove even the possibility of future jealousy on these subjects. And it appears from the observations of the French Government on the first sketch of this *Projet* that they felt the force of this remark. There can therefore be no doubt of their readiness to concur in anything which can give it a greater degree of stability and certainty. And we shall probably arrive sooner at the great object—a solid and comprehensive settlement of the commercial intercourse between the two countries than by beginning with a Preliminary Treaty, unexceptionable indeed in its principles, but which would necessarily reserve some very important points for separate discussion, and would in the meantime leave the whole system incomplete and precarious.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt then pointed out to Eden that the discussion of a compact of a temporary nature would tend to unsettle the minds of traders and perhaps even to discredit the whole undertaking. Accordingly he enclosed a Declaration, which comprised the substance of the French *Projet*, but gave it a more permanent form and set limits to the duties which might thereafter be levied. The letter shows that he had got over his first suspicions and was now working for a more thorough and permanent settlement than that sketched by Rayneval. The draft of the British Declaration is in Pitt's writing—a proof that he had taken this matter largely into his own hands. The replies of Eden to him are both long and frequent; but most of those preserved in the British Museum are too faded to be legible. In that of 6th June he warned Pitt

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 333.

that France was ready to settle matters on friendly terms, but, as there were many intrigues against the treaty, Pitt should conclude it promptly. More favourable terms might possibly be gained for British cottons and steel; but it would be best not to press the Versailles Cabinet too hard.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt, however, refused to hurry matters. Indeed, the only part of this long effusion which he heeded, seems to have been that respecting steel and cottons. He further distressed Eden by his action with regard to silks. Under pressure from the London silk-workers, he found it necessary to continue to exclude all foreign silk-goods,<sup>2</sup> which caused Eden to remark on 17th June: "With what face I am to propose the admission of English cottons and the exclusion of French silks I do not well foresee."<sup>3</sup>

Most of the official letters between Pitt and Eden will be found in Lord Auckland's Journals. We will therefore glance only at some of their letters which have not been published. They show that Pitt sought by all possible means to lessen the duties on British cottons and hardware imported into France, and that he demurred to the abrogation of the Methuen Treaty with Portugal (1703) which had accorded to her wines exceptionally favourable treatment. Discussions on these and other topics were retarded by the long debates at Westminster concerning the Sinking Fund and Warren Hastings: so that on 13th July Eden ironically informed Pitt that all his letters to him since 10th June had miscarried. The close of the session (11th July) left Pitt freer for diplomatic affairs; he threw himself into the bargaining with much zest, and Eden more than once hinted that a great outcry would arise in France if their Ministers gave way to our demands.

Nevertheless, Pitt struggled hard to obtain the best possible terms not only for Great Britain but also for Ireland. Despite Eden's repeated appeals for urgency, he asked the Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to induce the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Speaker, and Beresford to come to London for the purpose of advising him on several matters that con-

<sup>1</sup> This letter of 6th June has no date of the year, and it has been bound up in vol. 28064 of the Add. MSS. in the British Museum for the year 1789 of the Auckland MSS. Internal evidence shows that the year should be 1786.

<sup>2</sup> Their memorial, dated 22nd February 1786, is from the London silk trade (B.M. Add. MSS., 34420). It states that "no alteration or modification whatsoever, short of the present prohibition of all foreign wrought silks, can ensure the silk trade to this country."

<sup>3</sup> Pitt MSS., 110.

cerned Ireland, especially as to the admission or exclusion of French linens. This further delay wrung Eden's heart, and he wrote on 31st August: "Your political courage goes beyond mine, for I suppose that you look without anxiety on this fortnight's delay, which we are giving. In truth, if it is given in politeness to Ireland, it is a great compliment; for it is impossible to do more for Ireland than we have done."<sup>1</sup> He then made the noteworthy prophecy that, as the treaty could not possibly adjust all the topics relating to the trade of Britain and Ireland, it would lead up to a right settlement between the two islands. Certainly Eden equalled Pitt in foresight, however much he fell short of him in coolness, determination, and bargaining power.

These qualities appear very forcibly in the Anglo-French negotiation. It is probable that Pitt bargained too closely; but the reason is apparent if one looks at the scores of petitions that reached him from alarmed manufacturers. Lancashire was well to the front in its demands for favourable terms; and we therefore find Pitt holding out for only a 5 per cent. duty in France on British cottons. To this Rayneval retorted by claiming at least 20 per cent.—"M. de Vergennes was of opinion," wrote Eden, "for 15 per cent., and M. de Calonne, after much dispute, and by the aid of a paper in which I had urged for 5 per cent., split the difference and carried it for 10 (but with great doubts)."<sup>2</sup> Calonne, the cheerful and prodigal Controller of Finances, now began to take a closer interest in the treaty; he inveighed against Pitt for prohibiting French silks while expecting the almost free entry of British cottons, and said that there were *hatters* workers at Lyons who would curse him for this treaty. This explains why the French negotiators once again held out for 15 per cent., and, when that was rejected by Pitt, finally fixed it at 12 per cent.

Pitt also struggled to gain easier terms for Irish linens in France, and suggested that if this were conceded, the Dublin Parliament would probably accept the Anglo-French treaty *in toto*.<sup>3</sup> On the subject of hardware Pitt fought for the interests of Birmingham, as appears in the draft of a long despatch to Eden, of 4th September, with many corrections and additions in his

<sup>1</sup> "Pitt-Rutland Corresp.," 158; "Beaufort Papers" (Hist. MSS. Commission), 353.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 110. Eden to Pitt, 2nd August.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Pitt to Eden, 12th September.

writing. Very significant is the last sentence, which is in his hand:

If you cannot obtain a reduction to 5 or 7½ per cent. on iron, copper, or brass, you will endeavour to gain it on iron alone, that being a point which H. M.'s servants have most earnestly at heart, and in which the reasoning above stated seems conclusive in our favour. This is a point to be pressed to the utmost, but if you should find it *absolutely* impossible to carry it, it should not ultimately prevent your signing the treaty.<sup>1</sup>

The treaty, signed at Versailles on 26th September 1786, may be thus summarized: It granted complete freedom of navigation and trading rights between the two nations for their European dominions. The subjects of either kingdom were thenceforth free to enter the lands of the other without licence or passport, and free of any capitation tax—a privilege most unusual in those days—and to enjoy perfect religious liberty. In regard to the most important of French exports, namely, wine, Great Britain agreed to place her neighbour on the footing of the most favoured nation by lowering the duties to the level of those imposed on Portuguese wines. The duties on French vinegar and oil were also greatly reduced. The following articles nominally concerned both nations, but in practice applied almost entirely to British imports into France. Hardware, cutlery, and similar goods were not to pay more than 10 per cent.; cottons, woollens, muslins, lawns, cambrics, and most kinds of gauzes, not more than 12 per cent.; but silks, or articles partly silken, were prohibited as formerly. Linens were reciprocally to be charged at no higher rates than those levied on Dutch linens imported into Ireland, that is, at "the most favoured nation" rates. Saddlery, porcelain, pottery, and glass of all kinds, were to pay no more than 12 per cent. The highest impost retained was 30 per cent., levied on beer, perhaps because the interchange of that product was certain to be small. Countervailing duties might, however, be placed on certain articles. In the concluding forty articles of the treaty (one of the longest and most complex ever signed), the contracting Powers sought to lay down principles or regulations for the avoidance of disputes with respect to contraband and prohibited

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 20. For further details see my article in the "Eng. Hist. Rev." for October 1908.

goods, smuggling, privateering, the suppression of piracy, and other subjects. They also left themselves free to revise the treaty at the end of twelve years. It is noteworthy that each of the contracting Powers affirmed the principle of seizing and confiscating the goods of the other Power when found on an enemy's merchantman, provided that they were embarked after the declaration of war.<sup>1</sup>

The treaty disappointed the hopes of some enthusiasts, who hoped that it might include some proviso for arbitration. Among these was William Pulteney, who, on 14th September, wrote to Pitt in terms that deserve to be remembered. After pointing out the futility of prohibitive edicts, he continued:

It is to be considered whether this is not a good opportunity to ingraft upon this treaty some arrangement that may effectually tend to prevent future wars at least for a considerable time. Why may not two nations adopt, what individuals often adopt who have dealings that may lead to disputes, the measure of agreeing beforehand that in case any differences shall happen which they cannot settle amicably, the question shall be referred to arbitration. The matter in dispute is seldom of much real consequence, but the point of honour prevents either party from yielding, but if it is decided by third parties, each may be contented. The arbitrators should not be sovereign princes; but might not each nation name three judges, either of their own courts of law, or of any other country, out of whom the opposite nation should choose one, and these two hear the question and either determine it or name an umpire—the whole proceedings to be in writing? This would occasion the matter to be better discussed than is commonly done, and would give time for the parties to cool and most probably reconcile them to the decision, what ever it might be.

It has frequently occurred to my mind that, if France and England understood each other, the world might be kept in peace from one end of the globe to the other. And why may they not understand each other? I allow that France is the most intriguing nation upon earth; that they are restless and faithless; but is it impossible to show them that every object of their intrigue may be better assured by good faith and a proper intelligence with us, and might we not arrange everything together now so as completely to satisfy both? . . .<sup>2</sup>

Pitt, we may note, had sought to take a first step towards the

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvi, 213-54; "Auckland Corresp.," i, 495-515; Martens, "Traité," iv, 155-80.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 169.

limitation of armaments, by suggesting that the two Powers should lessen their squadrons in the East Indies; but to this Vergennes, on 1st April 1786, refused his assent.<sup>1</sup> Seeing, too, that France was pressing on the works at Cherbourg, and forming an East India Company on a great scale, Pitt naturally restricted his aims to the establishment of friendly commercial relations. The progress made in this respect was immense. Powers recently at war had never before signed a treaty containing provisions of so wide a scope, and so intimate a character; and lovers of peace hailed it as inaugurating a new era of goodwill. "People in general," wrote the Duke of Dorset, from London, to Mr. Eden, "are very much pleased with your treaty: the principal merchants in the City don't choose to give an opinion about it; anything, if novel, is apt to stupify merchants. . . . I never saw the King in such spirits: they rise in proportion to the stocks, which are beyond the sanguine expectations of everybody."<sup>2</sup> The rise in Consols gave the verdict of the City in unmistakable terms, and it was generally endorsed. On 20th November the Marquis of Buckingham wrote: "My accounts are that all manufacturers are run wild in speculation. Our wool has felt it already."<sup>3</sup> A few cranks like Lord George Gordon declaimed against Pitt for selling his country to the French, but the majority of thinking men, even in the Chamber of Manufacturers, thankfully accepted the treaty. A Glasgow manufacturer wrote to Eden that Great Britain, having the best wool, the best iron, the best clays for pottery, the best coal, and by far the best machinery in the world, would soon beat the French in their own market.<sup>4</sup> This was the general opinion. Those who held it said nothing, but set to work to regain in France herself the market of which she had deprived us in America. The state of Great Britain and of France in the year 1789 showed which were the more durable, the triumphs of war or of peace.

Nevertheless, there was some opposition in the House of Commons. Early in the session of 1787, Fox brought forward the question of the treaty and pressed for delay, so that the feeling of the country might be ascertained. To this Pitt demurred, on the ground that members had had ample time to consider the

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 392, 6th October 1786.

<sup>3</sup> "Drogheda P.," i, 274.

<sup>4</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 404.



questions at issue, and that trade would suffer from the continuance of the present uncertainty. The arts which had undermined Pitt's compact with Ireland were now once more practised. Burke twitted the Prime Minister with looking on the affairs of two great nations in a counting-house spirit; and the Chamber of Manufacturers, in which opinions were divided, sought to frighten members by a petition setting forth "the serious and awful importance of the treaty . . . comprehending a prodigious change in the commercial system of this country."<sup>1</sup> This stage thunder was speedily divested of its terrors by Pitt pointing out that four months had elapsed since the signing of the treaty, and yet the Chamber of Manufacturers had remained silent until that day (12th February). After showing that neither our old ally, Portugal, nor our manufacturers had cause for alarm, Pitt raised the question to a high level in a passage which furnished a dignified retort both to the gibe of Burke, and to those who denounced trade with our traditional enemy: "To suppose," he said, "that any nation can be unalterably the enemy of another is weak and childish. It has its foundation neither in the experience of nations nor in the history of man. It is a libel on the constitution of political societies, and supposes the existence of diabolical malice in the original frame of man." Then, coming once more to practical considerations, he affirmed that, though the treaty was advantageous to France, it would be more so to us.<sup>2</sup>

In reply, Fox made one of the worst speeches of his career. He asserted twice over that France was the natural enemy of this land, owing to her overweening pride and boundless ambition; and that by means of the present treaty she sought to tie our hands and prevent us engaging in any alliances with foreign powers. Portugal, he said, was now made a sacrifice and peace-offering to France. The House refused to follow the vagaries of the Whig leader by 258 votes to 118; and the provisions of the treaty were passed in Committee by substantial majorities within a fortnight. The treaty passed the Lords on 6th March by 74 votes to 24.<sup>3</sup> In due course the treaty was ratified, and

<sup>1</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 404; "Parl. Hist.," xxvi, 342-78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 392, 394.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 397, 398, 402, 434, 595. Mr. J. L. to H. Hammond in his able work, "Charles James Fox" (1913), defends his hero on the ground that monarchial France was the enemy of England.

the ports on both sides of the Channel were opened to free commercial intercourse on 10th May 1787.

Pitt undoubtedly erred in proclaiming his conviction that the treaty was more advantageous to Great Britain than to France. He clinched his triumph in Parliament, but he imperilled the treaty; and it is noteworthy that he made that statement after Eden had warned him not to do so.<sup>1</sup> It was a weakness of which he was rarely guilty. The French negotiators had often pointed out that they were running a great risk of inflicting much harm on their industries. This was sober truth. Indeed, their general acquiescence in Pitt's requests has always been a puzzle; for the belief of Vergennes in Free Trade was not shared by the other Ministers, except perhaps by Calonne; and it was certain that the manufacturers of Rouen, Amiens, and Lille would cry out against the sudden change from prohibition to a 12 per cent. duty on textiles.

Daniel Hailes set himself to solve the riddle for the satisfaction of the ever distrustful Carmarthen, who, on 29th September 1786, wrote to him privately: "our suspicions of the good faith and friendly professions of France in political matters ought to be in exact proportion to the facility she may have evinced upon matters purely commercial." He further suggested that her aim was perhaps to sever our good relations with States with which we had political and commercial ties. Hailes, doubtless taking his cue from his chief, thereupon sought to find out the motives which had influenced the French Ministry, and summed up his conclusions in a long report. It gives an interesting but somewhat jaundiced account of affairs in that very critical year 1786—the year of the Diamond Necklace scandal and of the decision to convocate the Chamber of Notables for the rectification of abuses too deep-seated for Louis XVI to uproot. The report is too long to quote here except in its most important passage; but we may glance at its salient features. Hailes pointed out that France suffered nearly as much as England from the late war, which left her with a National Debt almost exactly equal to that of her rival; also that the hopes of Frenchmen to gain the trade of the United States had been blighted. The Court of Versailles had, moreover, not exercised "the wise management of venality and the

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 110. Eden to Pitt, 13th April 1786.

<sup>2</sup> "F. O.," France, 18.

economy of corruption and favor" which would have satisfied most of the privileged classes. Its partiality was as notorious as its extravagance; and the failure of the old commercial prohibitive system, as also of the recent prohibitive *arrêts*, was probably due to the corruption prevalent in Court and official circles; for, to quote Hailes's words:

Every one having credit enough with the great, or the mistresses of the great, to procure an exemption, would not have failed to apply for it in favour of some dependent or other. It seems therefore probable that the French Government felt its own inability to give effect to its prohibitory laws against the importation of British manufactures, and in that respect, at all events, they may be said to have been gainers by the treaty.

But I think I can take upon me to assure your Lordship that there exists another and no less principal cause of the ragemess of France to conclude the commercial arrangement. I mean that of the immediate relief of the *Treasure Royal* by the increase of the Revenue, an increase which, it may be presumed, will prove immense, from the sudden influx of all sorts of British merchandise paying the legal duties, as soon as the Treaty shall take effect. If this opinion should prove to be well grounded (and from the attention which I have paid to the late conduct of the Comptroller General [Calonne] I am much inclined to think it is) it will be a strong mark of the corruption of that Minister, who sacrifices to an immediate and temporary resource the dearest interests of his country.<sup>1</sup>

We need not lay much stress on the personal arguments here adduced; for Hailes may have been unduly influenced by the partisans of Necker or Breteuil, who were always at feud with Calonne. It is probable that Vergennes and Calonne were swayed by a deeper motive, namely, the desire to keep England quiet and friendly while they laid their schemes with a view to the ascendancy of France in the Dutch affairs soon to be described, and thereafter to the combination of their efforts for the overthrow of British power in the East. Such an aim is consonant with the philosophic thoroughness of the character of Vergennes and the ambition of his showy colleague. Whether Pitt suspected some such design is uncertain; that Carmarthen did so can admit of no doubt.

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 18. Hailes to Carmarthen, 25th October 1786. The Duke of Dorset thought very little of Hailes, but Hailes's despatches show far more knowledge of France than the Duke's.

Much, however, may be said for Hailes's views. It is generally admitted that the prodigal Calonne sacrificed very much in order to stand well with the Queen's party, and that his ardent desire was to put a good face on things at the time of the Assembly of the Notables early in 1787. There was every reason for his concern. The future of France depended on the docility of the Notables. If they were so far satisfied with the state of affairs as to pass the reforms desired by the King and Vergennes, the crisis which led up to the Revolution might have ended peacefully. Unjust taxation, constant deficits, and national bankruptcy were among the chief causes of the Revolution. Of course, Vergennes and Calonne could not foresee events; but they knew that the future was gloomy in the extreme unless the Notables induced the privileged classes to take up their fair share of the financial burdens. If Ministers were able to point to increased customs returns, the decline of smuggling, and the cementing of friendly relations with England, the Notables and the nobles at large might prove amenable to reason (for Anglomania was still the fashion); and all might yet go well. In these considerations probably lies the key to the conduct of the French Ministry in the later stages of the negotiation of 1786. With Vergennes the treaty was probably a matter of principle; to Calonne it was a device adopted in the course of that daring game of "neck or nothing," on which he staked the destinies of France. Though he was the chief sinner, Government and people alike behaved with incredible levity. Alvensleben, reporting on the situation at Versailles in November 1787, said: "Everything here is a matter of ceremony, clothes, varnish, phrases, national boasting, tinsel, intrigues; and everything is finally decided by forms."<sup>1</sup>

This scathing report was written after France had lost her one able statesman. Vergennes died shortly before the Notables assembled; and they, having to deal with an irresolute King and a political gamester, turned a deaf ear to counsels of Reform. Probably, too, they were influenced by the outcry against the commercial treaty, for it was general in all manufacturing centres, and did not pass away, as was the case in Great Britain. The Rouen Chamber of Commerce instituted an inquiry, the outcome of which was a report affirming the marked superiority of

<sup>1</sup> Flammermont, *op. cit.*, 125.

British textile goods to those of France, and the impossibility of competing with them on the basis of the 12 per cent. duty. An able writer, Dupont de Nemours, gave an effective answer to the report; but, as generally happens in such cases, the defence attracted less attention than the attack.<sup>1</sup> We must further remember that merchants who lived under an oppressive system of taxation had every possible reason for "crying poor." Complaints against the commercial treaty were hurled at Arthur Young in every French manufacturing town which he visited in his tours of 1787 and 1788. Abbeville, Amiens, Lille, and Lyons declared against it in varying tones of anger or despair; the wine districts alone were loud in its praise.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly the French textile industries suffered severely for a time. The taste for English goods continued to depress home products, and that, too, despite the efforts of Marie Antoinette to set the fashion for the latter. In 1788 as many as 5,442 looms were idle in Lyons; but it is to be observed that this crisis was due either to the continued smuggling of English silk goods, to the preference for our fine cottons, or to the failure of the silk harvest in that year. The last cause was probably the most important.<sup>3</sup> The woollen and cotton trades alone could have been directly affected by the treaty. In them the conditions were undoubtedly bad in the years 1787, 1788. At Troyes 443 looms were not worked out of 2,600, and that proportion was usual throughout the east and north of France.

M. Levasseur, however, who has carefully investigated the causes of this crisis, attributes it largely to the utter prostration of public credit in France, and the issue of a coinage of doubtful value. The bad harvest of 1788, followed by a terribly cold winter, also intensified the distress. He concludes that, even so, the commercial treaty might ultimately have been advantageous to certain parts of the industrial economy of France; but it was applied suddenly in a time of political unsettlement and general distress.<sup>4</sup>

We must also remember that Calonne had for many months been squandering the resources of France. In accordance with

<sup>1</sup> See summaries of both in Butenval, *op. cit.*, chs. xv, xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Young's "Travels in France" (Bohn edit., 1889), 8, 9, 69, 107, 284.

<sup>3</sup> Levasseur, "Hist. des Classes ouvrières," ii, 776.

<sup>4</sup> This is the judgement of R. Stourm, "Les Finances de l'Ancien Régime et de la Révolution," 59.

his motto: "In order to establish public credit one must cultivate luxury," he had raised loan upon loan in time of peace, and it has been estimated that in the forty-one months of his term of office (1783-87) he borrowed 650,000,000 francs (£26,000,000).<sup>1</sup> No fiscal experiment can have a fair chance under such conditions; and it is therefore a violation of the laws of evidence to assert that the Commercial Treaty of 1786 was the chief cause of the French Revolution.

Summing up the facts concerning this most interesting treaty, we may conclude that the honour of originating it undoubtedly belongs firstly to Vergennes, secondly to Shelburne, and only in the third place to Pitt. It is clear that the French statesman worked steadily for it during the negotiations of 1783, and used all available means to bring it about even while Pitt showed no responsive desire. As has been shown above, the young Prime Minister had good reasons for not taking the matter up seriously until the autumn of 1785. Indeed it would have been a tactical mistake to press on the commercial compact with France until he had put forth every effort to unite Ireland with Great Britain by intimate trade relations. When those endeavours were frustrated by ignorance and faction, he turned towards France, but slowly and suspiciously. Not until the negotiation was far advanced did he show much eagerness on the subject. But it is the mark of a great Minister to keep a firm grasp upon colleagues and subordinates at all important points; and Pitt saw the futility of Carmarthen's prejudices no less than the possible danger of Eden's Gallophile enthusiasm.

The hostile actions of the French agents in Holland, to which we must soon recur, made him cautious on matters purely political; and, while pushing on the commercial treaty, which Carmarthen looked on as a trap, he took care to subject the ardent fancies of Eden to cold douches like the following: "Though in the commercial business I think there are reasons for believing the French may be sincere, I cannot listen without suspicion to their professions of political friendship." As we shall see in the next chapters, Pitt generally treated with wholesome scepticism the alarmist news sent by Harris from The Hague. But the tidings from that quarter enabled Pitt to assess at their due value the philanthropic professions of the *salons* of

<sup>1</sup> "Cambridge Mod. Hist.," viii, 74.

<sup>2</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 127. Pitt to Eden, 10th June 1786.

Paris. Not that he was indifferent to the golden hopes of that age. After the treaty was signed he gave expression to his hopes in words pulsating with a noble enthusiasm; but, while it was under discussion, he showed the balance of mind and keenness in bargaining which characterize a great statesman. We may also remark here that Pitt sought earnestly to bring about a favourable commercial treaty with Spain and Russia, but failed. The Czarina showed her hostility by granting to France a treaty on the basis of the most favoured nation.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we may hazard the conjecture that, if the finances of France had received from the Court of Versailles and Calonne a tithe of the fostering care which Pitt bestowed on those of Great Britain, both countries would have profited equally from the free commercial and social intercourse inaugurated by this memorable compact. As it was, France slid fast down the slope that led to the chasm of Revolution; and in the midst of that catastrophe Robespierre and his followers, who represented the prejudices of the northern manufacturing towns, spread abroad the spiteful falsehood that Pitt's commercial policy had ever been aimed at the financial ruin of the French nation.

Martens, "Traites," iv, 196-223. For these negotiations with Spain and Russia, see Salomon's "Pitt," 237-44. A little later Pitt started commercial negotiations with Prussia and Holland, but nothing came of them. It is clear, however, that he sought to revise the whole of our commercial relations.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE DUTCH CRISIS

(1786, 1787)

If we lose the Netherlands, France will acquire what she has always considered as the climax of her power.—SIR JAMES HARRIS, 1st May, 1787.

His Majesty wishes only the preservation of the independence and true constitution of the [Dutch] Republic. THE MARQUIS OF CARMARTHEN, 29th June, 1787 (H. M. Add. MSS., 35539).

WE have interrupted our survey of Pitt's foreign policy in order to present a connected account of that interesting episode, the commercial treaty with France. But this event took place in a year which witnessed the growth of a crisis so serious as to threaten ruin to that constructive effort. The crisis arose from the sharp conflict of interests between Great Britain and France in Dutch affairs, as described in Chapter XIII. As no adequate account has yet appeared in English on this question, I propose to treat it on a scale proportionate to its importance.

The reader will remember that the feuds between the Patriots, abetted by France and the Stadholder's party, had already aroused keen interest at London and Paris; that our able envoy, Harris, had bravely waged an unequal campaign for the Prince and Princess of Orange—unequal, because Pitt persistently forbade him to commit this country to the defence of their cause, though sentiment and policy linked it to that of England. Further, the general situation of the Powers then seemed irretrievably to doom the Prince's fortunes. Frederick the Great, in his desire to keep on good terms with France, refused to help his niece, Wilhelmina, Princess of Orange. Austria was allied with France, and Russia with Austria. Finally, neither Pitt nor the Marquis of Carmarthen deemed it possible to frame an alliance with Prussia; and all the advances which they made to the Czarina, Catherine II, and the Emperor Joseph II, were coldly



repelled. In fact, no Power cared for an alliance with England. The conclusion of the Franco-Dutch alliance of November 1785 seemed to close all doors against her. When the fortunes of a State have been on the decline, it is very hard to stop the downward movement. That was the position of Great Britain early in the year 1786.

The only sources of hope seemed to be in the imminence of the death of Frederick and in the outrageous actions of the Dutch Patriots. Their violent support of provincial rights and hatred of the Stadholder and his mildly centralizing policy were carried to strange lengths. The Estates of Holland decreed that no Orange songs were to be sung, and no Orange colours worn. Harris relates that a woman came near to be hanged for the latter offence. Even the vendor of carrots was suspect unless he left the roots in a protective coating of soil. To a home-loving people like the Dutch these pedantries became ever more hateful. The bovine character of the Stadholder was to some extent a safeguard; for who could reasonably claim that his colossal powers of inaction would ever be a danger to the Republic? It is fairly certain that he had the allegiance of the rural population everywhere, even in the Province of Holland; but the populace of the large towns was overwhelmingly on the side of the Patriots; and the Estates of Holland (a province which contained more than half the population, and more than half the wealth, of the whole Union) decidedly opposed him.<sup>1</sup> Of the smaller provinces, Guelderland, Zealand, and Friesland supported the Stadholder. Utrecht was torn with schism on this subject, the rural districts cleaving to him, while the city of Utrecht broke away, and defied his authority. As Pitt forbade Harris to take any step which would commit England to the defence of the Stadholder, that envoy continued to play an apparently hopeless game. But his skill, resource, his commanding personality, and occasional bribes, enabled him to continue the struggle, even in democratic Holland. His great difficulty was that France in April 1786 had let it be known that she would allow no other Power to interfere in Dutch affairs, and would forcibly oppose any such attempt. To strive against the Patriots while

<sup>1</sup> The contributions of the Provinces to the needs of the Union show their respective resources. Out of every 100 florins of federal revenue, Holland contributed 57½, Friesland 11½, Zealand 9, Groningen 5½, Utrecht 5½, Guelderland 5½, Overijssel 3½, Drent 1.

they had a ground of confidence utterly denied to their opponents, was to condemn Harris to struggle against great odds, and never has an unequal fight been more gallantly fought. The worst symptom was the rise of bodies of armed burghers, styled Free Corps, which soon attained considerable strength. Encouraged by success, the Patriots sought to depose William V outright, and proclaimed the Princess Regent during the minority of her son. She rejected this scheme with indignation. Failing here, they struck at the authority of the Prince by procuring from the Estates of Holland his deposition from the command of the regular troops of that province. This blow could not be parried; and it dealt consternation among the loyalists.

There was no hope of help from Frederick the Great. For the reasons previously stated he had hardened his heart against all the appeals that came from the Princess of Orange; and she finally rejected with scorn his advice that she should come to terms with the Patriots and France. On 16th May 1786 Harris summed up the relations of Prussia to France and Holland in this sprightly way:

"Prussia says to France 'Do what you please in Holland, but leave at least the appearance of a Stadholderian Government.' - France replies - 'We shall lose the confidence and support of the Patriots and with it our whole influence in the Republic if we mention the word "Stadholder"; take from us the odium of the measure by declaring you cannot see him deposed. We then may, without displeasing our friends, espouse his cause to a certain degree, and we shall both be satisfied.'"<sup>1</sup>

While the welter was ever increasing in this once prosperous land, there came a gleam of hope from the East. On 17th August 1786 Frederick the Great was gathered to his fathers, and his nephew Frederick William II reigned in his stead. As Prince Royal he had spoken warily of his resolve to right the wrongs of his sister, the Princess of Orange; but as King he disappointed her hopes. His character was despicable. Extravagance and dissipation were accountable for private debts amounting to one million sterling at the time of his accession and soon

<sup>1</sup> For details see Luckwoldt, *op. cit.* On a similar plan, Harris had written to Carmarthen on 3rd January 1786 that the idea of France keeping the Stadholder in his position and England then aiding him is so monstrous that Frederick "must think us mere novices in politicks" (B.M. Add. MSS., 28661).

after to three-quarters of a million more.<sup>1</sup> But his irresolution was of more serious consequence. A vicious man may excel as a ruler; an unstable man, never. Frederick William had scarcely a feature in common with the masterful race of the Hohenzollerns. The contrast between him and his uncle was startling. In place of that silent, cynical, and dogged ruler, Berlin and Sans-Souci rejoiced in a handsome, affable monarch, who seemed made to win the hearts of all at first sight and to lose them on closer acquaintance. For it was found that with him work and policy depended on whims and moods. Swaying to and fro between energy and sloth, violence and timidity, he disconcerted his Ministers, until they came to see that the King's resolves were as fleeting as his feelings. After the first flush of activity wore away, languor pervaded every bureau of that centralized autocracy. On 6th January 1787 Lord Dalrymple, our ambassador at Berlin, wrote of the King: "in general he appears very indifferent about what is passing"; and he further reported that he urgently desired to "get rid of so irksome an affair" as his sister's troubles, and looked on the Prince of Orange as the chief cause of the dissensions in the Dutch Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> Another of our envoys, with more wit than is usually found in semi-official letters, summed up the difference between Frederick the Great and Frederick William II by saying that the former had the wisdom of Solomon, but the latter resembled that potentate only in respect of his overflowing harem. Mirabeau's opinion on the imminent downfall of the Prussian State is too well known to need quoting here.

Yet the nonchalance of Frederick William in foreign affairs is not wholly indefensible. Confronted by the alliance of those scheming and unscrupulous rulers, Catharine II and Joseph II, he could effect little until he had the friendship of one at least of the Great Powers; but France was pledged to Austria, and England was still averse from a Prussian alliance. On 20th October 1786 Dalrymple thus summed up his arguments against a compact with the Court of Berlin: "We might indeed form a temporary co-operation with Prussia for some particular purposes, as at present in the case of Holland, where little or no opposition is to be expected from the two Imperial Courts; but

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28061 and 28062. Dalrymple to Carmarthen, 20th October 1786, 23rd January 1787.

<sup>2</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 11. So Luckwaldt, *op. cit.*, 52-7.

to enter into a general and permanent system with Prussia alone, without the concurrence of other Powers, would be a measure, in my apprehension, perfectly frantic, and only to be justified by a combination similar to that in 1756 being formed against us." Four days later, after an interview with Hertzberg, Dalrymple wrote that a Northern League between us and the Baltic Powers was out of the question during the lifetime of the Czarina, seeing that Turkish schemes stood first in her thoughts, and these implied alliance with Joseph.<sup>1</sup> As will shortly appear, the knowledge which the Turks had of these schemes was to lead to the Eastern War of 1787, which ended the suspense besetting Prussia and England.

For the present the isolation of these States left them in a most precarious position. The utmost they could hope for was to struggle on, waiting for a turn of Fortune's wheel in their favour. The first aim of the Court of Berlin was to thwart the Austrian scheme for exchanging the Belgic provinces for Bavaria. Joseph II still pursued this phantom, though he had his hands full in Brabant, where philosophism had again stirred up revolt, and his alliance with Catharine portended war with the resentful Turks. Frederick William believed, and perhaps rightly, that so long as the Austro-Russian alliance held good, Prussia could take no step Rhinewards. He therefore saw in the entreaties of his sister only a scheme to draw him into fatal courses; and when the entreaties became reproaches his answers became few and cold.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, too, the influence of the veteran diplomatist, Hertzberg, was waning, because of an austere and somewhat superior manner which the young King resented. That Minister favoured a close understanding with England with a view to joint action at The Hague; but there was associated with him at the Foreign Ministry a colleague, Count Finckenstein, who strongly inclined towards France, thwarted Hertzberg's efforts, and prejudiced the King against an English alliance.<sup>3</sup> To add

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28061. See, too, "Mahomedary Diaries," ii, 212, for Carmarthen's view. "I never desire a connexion with Prussia unless Russia, and of course, Denmark, are included."

<sup>2</sup> All the despatches of this time serve to refute the statement of Lecky (v, 80) that the accession of Frederick William "greatly changed the situation" for the Powers of Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Wittichen, *op. cit.*, 635.

to the perplexities of the time, Thulemeyer, the Prussian envoy at The Hague, supported France; and Harris suspected him, perhaps rightly, of having been bought over by the Patriots and their paymasters. He certainly thwarted the efforts of Görtz, a special envoy sent from Berlin to The Hague; and finally the Princess of Orange begged her brother, seeing that he would not help her, at least not to allow Thulemeyer to act in concert with De Verac, the French envoy at The Hague.<sup>1</sup> Early in May she sent a request for a loan of Prussian cannon in order to withstand the growing forces of the Patriots, but met with a refusal.

Matters, however, now took a turn for the better for that unfortunate Princess. Latterly the Court of Berlin had sought to arrange with that of Versailles a plan of joint intervention so as to end the strifes in the United Provinces in a way not too derogatory to the Prince of Orange. But this proposal was accompanied by conditions which were at once very tartly rejected by the Court of Versailles. This refusal of a friendly overture was to have far-reaching results, for the irritation of the Prussian monarch now led him to favour the idea of intervention in Holland.

This brief survey will have enabled us to understand the gradual development of Pitt's policy from strict neutrality to tentative and cautious activity. The change of attitude will be found to correspond closely with a change in Continental affairs which enabled him with little risk to raise his country once more to her rightful position.

It is the mark of a great statesman to keep his gaze on all the chief matters of public interest, to weigh their importance, and to make his policy the resultant, as it were, of the leading forces and best tendencies of his age. No one who has not a clear vision and ripe judgement can give such an assessment and act on it with tact and firmness. Small minds are certain to be diverted towards side issues and hastily to take up questions which are unripe for solution. From these faults Pitt's singular maturity of mind and steadiness of purpose kept him free. He saw that the greatest of British interests was peace; and, despite the pressing claims of Harris at The Hague, he refused to be drawn blindfold into the irritating and obscure questions there

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 11. Dalrymple to Carmarthen, 21st April 1787.

at stake. True, it was important to keep the United Provinces from becoming dependent on France; but he believed that the efforts of the Patriots in that direction might be curbed by means of diplomacy. No statesman prefers a warlike to a peaceful solution unless all the resources of his own craft have been exhausted, least of all could the champion of economy, who naturally discounted the clamorous appeals of Harris for help.

There were reasons why our envoy should urge Pitt to adopt a more forward policy. In the autumn of 1786 the fortunes of the Stadholder steadily declined, and the raids of the Patriots on his prerogatives became more daring and successful. In September, as we saw, he was deprived of the command of the regular forces in the Province of Holland. His opponents, the Patriots, next strengthened their Free Corps, drew a cordon of troops along the frontiers of Holland, and overthrew his authority in the hitherto loyal provinces, Overijssel and Groningen. The city of Utrecht also defied him and elected Estates, while those of the still loyal Province of Utrecht assembled at Amersfoort. Other towns, even in the loyal provinces, seemed likely to follow the example of Utrecht. In face of these facts the appeals of Harris for help became more urgent than ever. On 24th October he wrote privately to Carmarthen: "As we are afraid to threaten, we must either bribe or give up the game."<sup>1</sup> But, realizing more and more that the obstacle to his forward policy lay in the peaceful resolves of Pitt, he wrote directly to him on 28th November, pointing out that France was making amazing strides everywhere at our expense, that she was on the point of gaining complete control over the United Provinces, and he hinted that that accession to her naval strength and to her resources in the East Indies would enable her soon to attack England in overwhelming strength.

Much could be said in favour of this view. The activity of France in the East, as we saw in the last chapter, had been very threatening, and it is clear that the schemes of St. Priest and other French agents in Egypt pointed out the path on which Bonaparte set forth with heroic stride thirteen years later. Dreams of a French Empire in the East haunted many minds at Paris in 1786. On 7th September, shortly before the signature of the Anglo-French commercial treaty, Hallet, Secretary of

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Add. MSS., 28060.

Legation at Paris, reported that the French Government seemed to be preparing for "the entire subversion" of British power in India; and he cynically added that when the time for action came, "then, as formerly, the rights of mankind will be held out as the pretext."<sup>1</sup> Even Eden sent word that there was talk of a design that France should gain control over all the Dutch ports in the East Indies.<sup>2</sup> When we remember that the Cape of Good Hope was a Dutch possession, and that the British lands in India were scattered and weak, we can appreciate the gravity of the crisis.

The surmises of Hailes and Eden were correct. There was a powerful party at the French Court which worked in alliance with the Dutch Patriots for the control of the East Indies. They saw their opportunity in the bankruptcy then threatening the Dutch East India Company; and in the winter of 1786 the Patriot leader, the Rhinegrave of Salm, sent to the Cabinet of Versailles a plan of a Franco-Dutch alliance with a view to the overthrow of the British power in India. Thanks to the pacific views of Louis XVI and Vergennes, nothing came of the scheme; but the Patriots then changed front and offered to hand over to France the important naval station, Trincomalee, in the north-east of Ceylon, to serve as a place of arms for France in case of war. This plan had a favourable reception at Versailles, some of the Ministers urging that 18,000 troops should be sent out under the command of General de Bouillé. This soldier (the hero of Carlyle's stirring account of the Mutiny of Nancy in 1790) states in his Memoirs<sup>3</sup> that he remained some time at Paris in hopes of receiving the order for the conquest of the British settlements in India; but he remained in vain; for the French Cabinet *found no opportunity for going to war*. The events now to be described will explain the sorry ending to these golden hopes; and the reader will bear in mind that the struggle of the rival Powers for ascendancy in Holland concerned the fate of Britain's Indian Empire no less than her position in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 18.    <sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 110.    <sup>3</sup> Bouillé, "Mems.," ch. i.

<sup>4</sup> Grenville during his mission to The Hague in August 1787 got an inkling of the wider scheme described above, as appears in his phrase "One's mind at once runs to Trincomalee." So late as August 1788 Pitt was nervous about the fate of that port. See his letter to Grenville as to the rumour of 800 French troops sailing thither ("Dropmore P.," ii, 280, 353).

All the more astonishing, then, is the calmness of Pitt's reply to Harris of 5th December 1786. In it he directed him to do all in his power to keep together the Orange party, so that it might "act with advantage, both for their own country and for us, on some future day, if it should arrive." For the present, however, that party must "lie by," and avoid pushing things to an extremity which would commit both themselves and England.<sup>1</sup>

This cautious policy was perhaps in some measure due to the King, who strongly opposed a forward policy in the Netherlands. His chief preoccupation in the years 1786, 1787, was the extravagance of the Prince of Wales and the rapidly increasing expense of his own family, to which he refers in pathetic terms. The news of the activity of Sir James Harris at The Hague "much affected" him; and when, on 7th January 1787, Lord Carmarthen wrote to Windsor in order to suggest a more energetic policy in the Netherlands, a sharp retort came, bidding that Minister remember "the disgraceful conduct" of England in the late war, and asserting that he (George III) refused to act as the *Draco-can-sir* of Europe.<sup>2</sup>

From the tenour of the King's letter to Pitt on 8th January we may infer that Carmarthen had kept his overture to Windsor secret; and Pitt, on hearing of it from the King, must have felt piqued at his colleague's action. Already they were on strained terms owing to Pitt having insisted on Carmarthen's presence at Court, despite indisposition, in order to present the Portuguese envoy; and a chief who demanded so strict an observance of etiquette was certain to resent any private attempt of his Foreign Minister to influence the King's opinions on a far weightier question. There is an apologetic tone in Carmarthen's hitherto unpublished letter of 8th January to Pitt. The first sentences refer to his ill health, and are omitted:

Hendon, Jan. 8, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I wish to lay before you *in confidence* my letter to the King of yesterday, together with His Majesty's answer of this morning's date, which I am free to confess to you has occasioned me a considerable degree of uneasiness. . . . You will, I am sure, do me the justice to remark the manner in which I have stated my opinion to the King and I have always understood your sentiments to be precisely the same in

<sup>1</sup> "Proposure I.," ii, 351-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 367, 368; "Leeds Memoranda," 117.



regard to the *object*, though perhaps more cautious (from prudential and well founded motives) in the means to be employed. I am free to own that, eager as I am for preventing France acquiring the absolute command of Holland, I have always thought we might succeed by means of private negotiation and intrigue. The experiment of trying to combat her with her own weapons would have some merit; and, convinced as I am that she has reckoned all along upon England not interfering, I think the present moment must not be passed by without our endeavouring to make the most we can of the Provinces which are opposed to Holland, and of the present firmness of the Prince and Princess of Orange. *L'Assemblée des Notables* is I think some security for the pacific disposition of France, or rather for her inability of indulging any of a contrary nature at present. I should hope we might have a meeting on Thursday for the Dutch business.<sup>1</sup>

The differences between Pitt and Carmarthen were greater than are here represented; and the joint influence of the King and Pitt prevented the adoption of the more spirited measures towards which he inclined. This was gall and wormwood to Harris. That able envoy, looking on helplessly at the brilliant diplomatic successes of France, failed to see the canker which was eating at her heart. The Assembly of the Notables was "the beginning of the end." It implied the inability of the absolute monarchy to carry the urgently needed reforms or to meet the ordinary expenses of the State. Pitt saw this. Further, while Harris admitted that he regarded France as "a natural enemy," Pitt looked on her as a possible friend. On the Dutch Question alone was there keen rivalry between the two States; and, in view of the growing financial difficulties of France, delay was more than ever advisable; for her efforts abroad must slacken as her vitality lessened under the load of debt that Calonne was gaily heaping up. In the meantime, until the Prussian monarch had the will, and England had the power, to intervene, Harris must continue his Sisyphus toil, and the Prince and Princess must suffer further indignities. Such was Pitt's policy. To our envoy it seemed unbearably mean; but it won in the end, and all the more surely for the delay. A Minister at the centre can often see things in truer perspective than an ambassador who is, after all, only at one point on the circumference.

Harris continued stoutly to roll the stone uphill. He helped

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 151.

to form an Association of the Provinces, towns and persons opposed to any change in the constitution; and, as the Stadholder in the early part of 1787 showed far more spirit and tact, the Patriots found it by no means easy to push the stone backwards. Harris declared on 20th April 1787 that the popular indignation ran strongly against the Patriots, who had not one-twentieth of the people on their side. This is incredible; but it is quite certain that his activity and the less determined policy of Montmorin, the successor of Vergennes at Versailles, put new heart into the Stadholder's party. Nevertheless, the Patriots carried the day at Amsterdam by sheer audacity, and compelled the Regents, or magistrates, to dismiss nine of their number. This act of violence, together with the increasing activity of William V and the signs of wavering at Versailles, led Harris to request an interview with Ministers at Whitehall.<sup>1</sup> He also bore a letter of the Princess to George III, which met with no favourable response.

A Cabinet meeting was held on 23rd May 1787, at which Harris was present, and submitted his opinions to a full discussion. Ministers met at Thurlow's house for dinner; and he in due course launched forth on the troubled sea of Dutch politics, stating at great length the arguments against intervention, then tearing them to pieces, and declaring even for war with France, if the need arose. Richmond, Master of the Ordnance, called for maps, discussed the military situation, and urged the need of speedy preparations. Pitt then admitted the immense importance of preserving the independence of Holland, and of facing war as a possible, but not probable, alternative; then, turning to Harris, he pressed him to say which course involved the greater risk, that of opposing France at once before she entirely dominated the Dutch Netherlands, or that of awaiting the issue of her present efforts. He also asked what kind of help the Orange party most needed. In reply to this and to similar questions from Thurlow, Harris urged that money should be supplied, especially to the Province of Guelderland; he declared that the supporters of the constitution would probably be overborne if they were not helped by England; that France was not in such a condition as to go to war in order to conquer Holland, but that when she

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 299. "I am certain if we begin to roar, France will shrink before us" (Harris to Carmarthen, 5th May). See, too, Witichen, 67.

had the upper hand there she probably would throw down the gauntlet. Stafford then declared in favour of intervention. Nevertheless, Pitt held firmly to his conviction, that no case was yet made out for a course of conduct which might possibly lead to war and so blight the budding prosperity of Great Britain. Carmarthen and Sydney did not speak. We may plausibly conjecture that the silence of the Foreign Minister betokened his disapproval of Pitt's views and his inability to controvert them.

So far as we can judge, Pitt alone was for complete neutrality. Nevertheless, his view prevailed. An interview which Harris had with him on the morrow did not change his sentiments; but, on 26th May, the Cabinet agreed to allow our envoy the sum of £20,000 so as to enable the loyal provinces to take into their pay the troops which had been disbanded by, or had deserted from, the forces of the Province of Holland.<sup>1</sup> On 10th June the further sum of £70,000 was advanced.<sup>2</sup>

Pitt's resolve was doubtless based on the difficulty of gaining an ally, for, as we have seen, the King of Prussia had recently refused the request of his sister for a loan of cannon and was proposing to concert plans with France for a joint mediation in Dutch affairs.<sup>3</sup> How was it possible for England alone to interfere for the Prince and Princess of Orange while their natural protector was making advances to their enemy? So little hope was there at present of aid from Prussia that on 12th June Carmarthen expressed to Harris his belief that the Orange party would get more help from the Emperor Joseph than from Frederick William. The torpor of that party was another depressing symptom. Time after time Carmarthen informed Harris that if the Prince's supporters desired help, they must bestir themselves: they had as yet the majority of the regular army and of the States-General on their side; and a fit use of this strength would save the situation.

Despite the efforts of Harris, the Patriots continued to gain ground. At the end of May their partisans wrecked the houses of the Prince's friends at Amsterdam, and crushed the reaction in his favour which had gathered head.<sup>4</sup> On 15th June the States-General decided, on the casting vote of the President,

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 303-6.

<sup>2</sup> "F. O.," Holland, 14.

<sup>3</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 11. Ewart to Carmarthen, 19th and 22nd May 1787.

<sup>4</sup> "F. O.," Holland, 14. Harris to Carmarthen, 1st June.

to admit the deputies sent by the illegal Estates of the city of Utrecht. This gave a bare majority to the Patriots, who then proceeded to deprive the Stadholder of the right to order the march of troops or the distribution of stores in the provinces outside Holland. Four days later, however, Harris was able to procure the rejection of this decree as illegal; and it was further decided that the Estates of Utrecht meeting at Amersfoort were the legal Estates of that province and could alone send deputies. Of course this change of front has been ascribed to English gold, and certainly it was due to Harris. This rebuff to the Patriots and the coyness of the French Court to their urgent demands for help may have led to the formation of a resolve which was to end the balancings of statesmen and the even pulls of parties. The solution of the Dutch problem was, in the first instance, due to a woman's wit.

About the middle of the month of June 1787, the Princess of Orange framed a plan for leaving her city of refuge, Nymeguen, and proceeding to The Hague with the aim of inspiring her crestfallen partisans. Hitherto the Orange party had shown the torpor which is the outcome of poor leadership. Of the Prince of Orange it might have been said, as it was said of Louis XVI, that he cooled his friends and heated his foes; but his consort had the fire and energy which he lacked. Harris once confessed that her frank, blue eyes could be "dangerous"; and in many ways her presence promised to breathe new life into her party.

As the journey to The Hague would involve some risk of insult from the Free Corps which formed a cordon on the frontier of the Province of Holland, she proceeded first to Amersfoort, where her consort was holding together his partisans in the Province of Utrecht. In order to gain his consent to this daring step. Thereafter she warned Harris and her chief friends at The Hague of her resolve, and asked their sanction, adding that the magnitude of the object at stake impelled her to run some measure of personal risk in order to compass it. Harris saw objections to the plan, but yielded to the representations of the Dutchmen. He, however, stated to Carmarthen his doubts whether she could make her way through the bodies of armed burghers, and asked his chief for instructions as to his course of action in case any violence were offered to Her Royal Highness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 322.

His apprehensions were in part to be realized. The princess set out from Nymeguen on 28th June with the ordinary retinue. While seeking to enter the Province of Holland near Schoonhoven, she was stopped by a lieutenant commanding a body of Free Corps, who refused to allow her to proceed; his action was endorsed by the authorities; and she was obliged, though without much personal indignity, to put up at the nearest house where the lieutenant kept her and her ladies-in-waiting under close and embarrassing surveillance, until she consented that the question of her journey should be decided by the Estates of Holland. Then she was allowed to return to Schoonhoven, where she indited letters to the Grand Pensionary and others, declaring that her sole aim was to promote a reconciliation. The Estates of Holland refused to allow her to proceed, and she had finally to return to Nymeguen. This insult to royalty sent a thrill of indignation through every Court but that of Versailles.

Before describing the political results of the incident, we may pause to ask whether the plan of the Princess's journey was the outcome of the fertile brain of Harris. That was the insinuation of the French Foreign Minister, Montmorin, and it has often been repeated.<sup>1</sup> The charge has never been proven; and the following reasons may be urged against it. Harris certainly hoped to profit by her presence at The Hague, but obviously he doubted the possibility of her entering the province. Further, on 29th June, when he heard of her detention, he wrote to Carmarthen: "The event which has happened oversets our whole plan. Check to the queen, and in a move or two checkmate is, I fear, the state of our game." Not yet did he see that the check might be worth a Prussian army to the Orange party. All he saw was the present discouragement of that party, and the timidity of the States-General of the United Provinces, who now refused to censure the outrage. Carmarthen saw more clearly. "Don't be so disheartened by a check to the queen," he replied. "Cover her by the knight and all's safe. . . . If the King, her brother, is not the dirtiest and shabbiest of Kings, he must resent it."<sup>2</sup>

But had the Princess throughout laid her plans with a view to such an event? In this connection it is significant that Frederick

<sup>1</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 521; Oscar Browning, "The Flight to Varennes and other Essays," 163.

<sup>2</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 329.

William of Prussia had latterly shown great irritation against the Court of Versailles owing to its summary rejection of his offer of a joint mediation in the Dutch troubles. Montmorin curtly declined every one of the preliminary terms which Hertzberg had succeeded in appending to that proposal. He also blamed the Stadholder for all the ferment, and stated that, if the Prussian monarch intervened in favour of the Orange party, he would "only compromise himself to his entire loss."<sup>1</sup> This nagging reply to a friendly overture cut the sensitive monarch to the quick; he sent a spirited remonstrance, declaimed against the bad faith of the French Government, and stated that he meant now to complete his own plans in Holland, that he hoped to have the support of England, and might draw the sword sooner than was expected.<sup>2</sup> Ewart expected little result from all this; but he was mistaken. Frederick William was a man of sentiment; and the appeal which now came from Holland was one that stirred his being to its depths.

The Princess, on hearing of his resentment against France, seems to have devised a course of action which would be likely to make this mood lasting. Harris reported on 22nd June that on the day before, "in consequence of a courier from Berlin, the Princess of Orange, a few hours after he arrived, left Nymeguen and set out for Amersfoort. She had time to write to nobody, and the cause of this sudden departure is not to be guessed at."<sup>3</sup> The short journey to Amersfoort was for the purpose described above. That the Princess was acting in close concert with her brother, and that Harris knew nothing as to the motives of her conduct further appear in statements which (strange to say) are omitted from his despatch of 25th June, printed in the "Diaries." He informed Carmarthen that she was sending a courier to Berlin, and that the present plan "completely does away all the ideas which have been very prevalent here for these three or four days, that His Prussian Majesty was so irritated at the late answer from France as to be decided to assist the Prince of Orange with men and money." Obviously the guile of Sir James Harris was of the diplomatic, not of the feminine, kind. Further, the fact that the Princess travelled with a retinue

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 11. Ewart to Carmarthen, 6th June 1787. Ewart was now *chargé d'affaires* at Berlin, Dalrymple having gone home on furlough. He did not return, and Ewart became ambassador in August 1788.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Ewart's note of 30th June.

<sup>3</sup> "F. O.," Holland, 15.

made it almost certain that she would be stopped by the cordon of Free Corps on the frontier of Holland. If her chief aim had been to arrive at The Hague, she would have gone in disguise; for only so could she hope to pass through the troops. Her chief aim surely was to be stopped; and the more contumeliously, the better for her purpose.

Her letters written after the incident show that she desired to reap the full advantage from it. On 6th July Harris reported her expectation that, if England proposed to Prussia a plan for rescuing the Republic from France, it would be well received at Berlin; and that she grounded her confidence in the reports of those who knew the King of Prussia well. Ewart also on 10th July stated that she had written to Berlin in terms implying that the honour of the King was at stake fully as much as her own.<sup>1</sup> With these proofs of the discouragement of Harris, and of the keen insight of the Princess before us, may we not infer that she deliberately chose to submit herself to an insult from the Patriots in order to clinch a resolve which she knew to be forming in her brother's mind? His anger against France might then be fanned to a flame of resentment fed by injured family pride.

Fortunately for her purpose, the Estates of Holland waived aside the demand of the King of Prussia for immediate and complete satisfaction for the insult; and Frederick William vowed that he would exact vengeance at the sword's point. Hertzberg now saw within his reach the great aims which Ewart and he had so long pursued, an Anglo-Prussian compact which might ripen into alliance. But it was a task of much difficulty to stiffen that monarch's wavering impulses. Hertzberg rightly saw that English influence should not at first be pushed;<sup>2</sup> and only when the King's resentment at the insult began to cool, were the wider questions of the future discreetly opened to his gaze. Here again the situation was complicated; for Finckenstein worked on his fears of an attack from Austria, if he intervened in Holland; and Thulemeyer, the Prussian envoy at The Hague, darkened the royal counsels by sending an official warning that Prussia must expect no help from England, even if France struck at the Prussian expeditionary corps. Ewart, however, was able to show that this report closely resembled an earlier one from the same source. The only result, then, was to discredit Thulemeyer and

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," Holland, 15; "F. O.," Prussia, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Luckwaldt, *op. cit.*, 66, 67.

have the way for his disgrace. When further friendly assurances came from the Pitt Ministry, Frederick William gave orders for the mustering of 25,000 troops at his fortress of Wesel on the lower Rhine. Even now he was afflicted by the irresolution which for so many years was to paralyze the power of his kingdom; and it is doubtful whether he would have acted at all but for the initiative now taken by the Prime Minister of England.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt's change of attitude at this time is the decisive event of the situation. At once, on hearing the news of the insult to the Princess of Orange, he saw that the time for action had come. In a personal interview with Count Lusi, Prussian ambassador at London, he pointed out that this was a matter which solely concerned the Prussian monarch, and in which France had no right to interfere.<sup>2</sup> George III spoke in the same terms to Lusi at a *levee*. Further, on the receipt of Ewart's despatch of 7th July, reporting that Pitt had declared against any intervention whatever by Great Britain, Carmarthen sent a sharp denial, and stated that diplomatic support would have been offered earlier to Prussia in Dutch affairs, but for the strange conduct of Thuleneyer at The Hague. If that conduct did not represent the wishes of the Prussian Government, His Majesty will be extremely ready to enter into a most confidential communication with His Prussian Majesty "on the means of preserving the independence of the Dutch Republic and the rights of the Stadholder. Carmarthen added the important information that Montmorin had declared that France would not thwart the Prussian monarch's resolve to gain reparation for the insult. That question he declared to be totally distinct from an interference in the domestic affairs of the Republic, which might be settled amicably by a joint mediation of the Powers most concerned in them, namely, the Emperor, Great Britain, Prussia, and France. The draft of this important despatch closed with this sentence, in Pitt's handwriting: "Could such a good understanding be agreed on, there can be little doubt that the affairs of Holland would be settled in an amicable way, to the satisfaction of all those who are interested in the welfare of the Republic."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wittichen (78, 79) holds that Frederick William's hesitation came from concern about the Furstenbund or the hope that France would join in a peaceful mediation in Holland.

<sup>2</sup> Lusi's report of 17th July 1787. Luckwahn, *op. cit.*, 68.

<sup>3</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 11. Carmarthen to Ewart, 17th July. "There is nothing in



It is clear, then, that Pitt meant to encourage Prussia to energetic action, in case the Estates of Holland did not grant full reparation for the insult; but he looked on that step merely as preliminary to the others which would solve the whole question by a peaceful mediation of the four Powers above named. On learning that the Emperor had expressed his friendly interest in the Prince of Orange and his approval of Prussia's conduct, the Foreign Office sent off a despatch to Keith, British Ambassador at Vienna, bidding him to urge his active co-operation "and to make it, if possible, the means of establishing a cordial and confidential correspondence with that Court in future."<sup>1</sup> Joseph II did not respond to this friendly proposal, probably because of troubles lowering in the East. But the incident proves the reluctance of our Foreign Office to act with Prussia alone, and also its hopes of a peaceful mediation in Dutch affairs. According to news received from Paris, France did not seem likely to oppose Prussia's action, and even favoured the scheme of a joint mediation of the three Powers, which were then on cordial terms.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the friendly assurances that came from London, and the manly advice of Hertzberg, Frederick William continued to vacillate in his usual manner. As we have seen, he had recently coquetted with the notion of a mediation conjointly with France alone; but, despite its curt rejection by the Court of Versailles, he now recurred to a similar scheme.<sup>3</sup> If France had played her cards well, she might even then have won the day at Berlin.

The conduct of the French Government at this crisis is hard to fathom. Its swift and unaccountable changes may perhaps be explained by the alternate triumph of peaceful and warlike counsels in the Ministry, which in the month of August under-

this despatch which warrants the statement of the editor of the "*Malmesbury Diaries*" (ii, 339*n.*) that we then offered Prussia armed support if France attacked her, and promised to make a demonstration with forty ships of the line. That was not proposed until the middle of September, in reply to French threats.

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," Austria, 14. Keith on 3rd August stated that the Emperor was friendly to us, but he was the ally of France, though he would not act with her in the Dutch Question.

<sup>2</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 11. Carmarthen to Kwart, 27th July.

<sup>3</sup> Wittichen, 81, shows that Wilhelmina herself worked hard to dissuade her brother from a mediation conjointly with France.

went some alterations. Towards Great Britain the tone was at first quite reassuring, a fact which may be ascribed to the friendly relations between Montmorin and Eden. Our envoy had visited London in July, and therefore, on his return to Paris at the end of the month, fully knew the intentions of his chiefs. Their pacific nature appeared in a proposal, which he was charged to make to Montmorin, for the discontinuance of warlike preparations on both sides until such time as notice might be given for their renewal. On 4th August the French Minister cordially received this proposal,<sup>1</sup> and it was acted on with sincerity until the crisis of the middle of September. But Eden soon found that the French Court intended forcibly to intervene if the Prussian troops entered the United Provinces, and that Montmorin had rejected the recent proposal from Berlin for a Franco-Prussian intervention.<sup>2</sup> Here, surely, the French Minister committed a surprising blunder. The traditional friendship between their Courts should have led him to welcome a proposal which would have kept England entirely out of the question. Probably he counted on procuring better terms from the ever complaisant Court of Berlin. If so, he erred egregiously. By repelling the advances of Prussia, he threw that Power into the arms of Great Britain; and Pitt was shrewd enough to accord a hearty welcome.

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 25. Eden to Carmarthen, 4th August 1787.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 8th August.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

This treaty produced an effect throughout the whole of Europe by its mere existence, without military preparations or force of arms.—VON SYBEL.

Pitt has already astonished all Europe by the alacrity of the late armament, and his name as a War Minister is now as high as that of his father ever was.—THE EARL OF MORNINGTON TO THE DUKE OF RUTLAND, 17th October 1787.

THE events described in the last chapter had brought England and Prussia to a crisis at which, despite their strong mutual suspicion, common action was imperiously needed in order to save the Dutch Netherlands from French domination. As we have seen, no British statesman had ever acquiesced in the supremacy of France in that country; and it is clear from the British archives that Pitt now took a keen interest in thwarting her designs. The draft of the official answer to Eden's despatch of 4th August 1787 is entirely in Pitt's writing, and it was sent without alteration or addition by the Foreign Minister, Lord Carmarthen—an unusual circumstance, which shows the masterful grip of the chief over matters of high import. In this despatch, of 10th August, he welcomed the assurance of Montmorin that warlike preparations would be stopped until further notice. Great Britain would, however, renew them after due notice if France assembled a force at Givet, on the Belgian border. He then referred pointedly to rumours that French transports had sailed for Amsterdam—a measure which would prejudice "the great work of conciliation which it is so much the object of the two Courts to forward and promote." French ships were also reported as laying in stores of food in British ports, a proceeding which would have been stopped but for the friendly assurances now received. He then referred to the invitation of the loyal provinces of Friesland and Zeeland, that

Great Britain would mediate on their behalf, and hinted that this might be done. The despatch closed with the following dignified remonstrance on the subject of the outrages of the Free Corps in Holland:

I am here also under the painful necessity of adding that the conduct held in the Province of Holland, apparently instigated by those who have all along appeared the instruments of France, seems to increase, instead of diminishing in violence. I enclose a copy of an address presented by the Free Corps of that Province, which it is intended that you should show to M. de M[ontmorin]. It cannot escape that Minister how little such a step is calculated to promote an accommodation or a suspension of hostilities, which his language so strongly recommends.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Pitt had sent his cousin, William Wyndham Grenville, to collect information at The Hague. As we saw in Chapter XII, the attainments of that young statesman, then Paymaster of the Forces, were eminently sound. His hard and practical nature stood in contrast to the sensitive and imaginative Harris, about whom George III trenchantly wrote to Pitt, that he was so easily discouraged that it was well he held no military command. Probably Pitt held the same opinion about Harris, whose forward policy he had long held in check. That there was some widespread distrust of him is clear from the observation of the Duke of Dorset, that "he was playing the devil at The Hague."<sup>2</sup> In any case, it was well to have independent advice, and the selection of so young a man as Grenville is a tribute to his prudence and ability.

He reached The Hague on 30th July, and during his stay of about three weeks succeeded in clearing up many points preliminary to the mediation. The letters which passed between him and Pitt bespeak a resolve on both sides to settle matters peaceably if possible. The following sentence in Pitt's letter of 1st August is noteworthy: "It is very material that our friends should not lose the superiority of force within the Republic, while we are labouring to protect it from interference from without." Six days later he wrote that the prospect was still favourable,

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 25.

<sup>2</sup> "Auckland Journals," I, 520. Lord Loughborough, in a letter of 13th October 1787 to Lord Carlisle stated that Grenville's mission was not due to distrust of Harris ("Carlisle P.," 654). But this seems to me very doubtful in view of the letters between Pitt and Grenville.

but that, if French troops were to assemble at Givet, it might be needful to resume naval preparations, so as to reassure Prussia.<sup>1</sup> Equally hopeful in tone is his letter of 2nd August to Earl Cornwallis, Governor-General of India. After pointing out that Great Britain could not allow France to become mistress of the Dutch Netherlands, and thereby add enormously to her naval strength and her power of aggression in India, he expressed the hope that the mediation of the three Powers would take place; but, failing an apology from the Estates of Holland, the King of Prussia would order his troops into that province, and take steps for "maintaining the just rights of the Stadholder and the constitution and independence of the Republic." If war broke out, Cornwallis was at once to strike at the Dutch settlement of Trincomalee, in Ceylon; while a force from England would be sent to reduce the Cape of Good Hope—the first sign in Pitt's letters of the importance which he attached to that post.<sup>2</sup>

Despite suspicious signs to the contrary, the French Cabinet at that time probably wished for a peaceful mediation, but the Courts of London and Versailles differed sharply as to the way of action. Pitt and Carmarthen held that reparation to the King of Prussia for the insult to his sister was a purely personal affair, distinct from the political issues. France now denied this; she belittled the affront to the Princess, and induced the Estates of Holland to frame an apology which was in the main a justification of their conduct. If Montmorin had pressed that body to make an adequate apology, it would certainly have been forthcoming. The stiff-neckedness of the Estates of Holland was due to their expectation of armed support from France if matters came to the sword; and the action of the Marquis de Vêrac, the French envoy, justified their confidence.

In truth, French policy wore different aspects at Paris and at The Hague. Montmorin assumed an air of injured innocence when Eden transmitted to him Pitt's remonstrances. On 15th August he indignantly denied the truth of the rumours about French transports sailing to Holland and of the food supplies drawn from England. He also complained of the harshness of Pitt's reference to the assembling of troops at Givet, an action

<sup>1</sup> "Drogheda P.," iii, 308-15. For the missions of Grenville to The Hague and Paris, see my article in the "Eng. Hist. Rev." for April 1909.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 102.

which was a natural retort to the muster of Prussians at their fortress of Wesel on the Rhine; and he merely laughed at the address of the Free Corps.<sup>1</sup> A week later Eden reported that Montmorin was anxious to settle the Dutch troubles peacefully and speedily, and would therefore recall the over-zealous Vêrac from The Hague. Pitt, however, refused to allow that Prussia was exceeding her just rights in claiming satisfaction for the insult. The fit way of ending the matter, he argued, would be for the Estates of Holland to apologize frankly and fully, whereupon the three Powers must insist on the dispersal and disarming of the Free Corps as a needful preliminary to the joint mediation.<sup>2</sup> On 28th August Eden heard that the French Government would not form the camp at Givet, it being understood that the Prussian monarch would limit his claims to the gaining of personal satisfaction, which France promised to procure from the Estates of Holland. This welcome news led Pitt to express the hope that an agreement would at once be framed for stopping the excesses of the Free Corps. Thus, so far as our dealings with Montmorin ran, there seemed, even at the end of August 1787, the likelihood of a peaceful settlement. A signal proof of Pitt's hopefulness is afforded by his letter of 28th August to Cornwallis at Calcutta. In this he speaks of the need of settling the personal question between the King of Prussia and the Estates of Holland as preliminary to the general settlement of the dispute. Even of that he cherished hopes, but he deemed caution and preparation so eminently necessary as to order the despatch of another regiment to Bombay.<sup>3</sup>

In truth, the central knot of the whole tangle was at The Hague. In order to understand the position there we must remember that the States-General, representing the Union, had not called on France for aid, in case of hostilities. Thanks to the skill and private influence of Harris, a majority of that body still upheld the claims of the Stadholder, deprecated any appeal to the Court of Versailles, and sought to procure from the Estates of Holland an apology to the King of Prussia. The Estates, however, stoutly refused to give anything more than a complacent explanation of the incident. The spirit which animated that assembly appears in the comment of one of the leading Patriots

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," France, 25. Eden to Carmarthen, 16th August 1787.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Carmarthen to Eden, 24th August.

<sup>3</sup> Pitt MSS., 162; and "Cornwallis Correspondence," i, 333-7.

on the Prussian ultimatum: "A sovereign body can never apologize to the wife of its first servant."<sup>1</sup> The Memoirs of Count de Portes, a Swiss officer who espoused the cause of the Dutch Patriots and helped to raise a regiment for them, show the cause of their confidence. He wrote on 14th September: "Though the Prussians are at our gates, they seem to me still at the sport of politics, and I can scarcely believe that they will put themselves between our waters and *our French*. At the worst we will open our sluices and drown ourselves."<sup>2</sup>

There was the strength of the Patriots. In a legal sense their case was weak; but their audacious energy even now promised to snatch victory from the inert Orange party. The Free Corps in the months of July and August became more numerous and insolent than ever, and it was a notorious fact that hundreds of French officers and soldiers had passed into their ranks.<sup>3</sup> Thus strengthened, they marched about the country, taking some places by force, and in several cases deposing the Regents, or chief magistrates appointed by the Stadholder. On all sides they despoiled the property of opponents, and carried confusion to the gates of The Hague. On 1st August Harris thus summed up his hopes and wishes to Carmarthen: "If I am de-Witted, don't let me be outwitted, but revenge me."<sup>4</sup> Count Bentinck also wrote: "the majority of Holland have made themselves masters of our lives and property; . . . they are masters of the purse, and of the sword, and of the Courts of Justice."<sup>5</sup> That arch intriguer, Vêrac, on 31st August, the very day of his recall, assured the Patriots that France would never desert them. This boast was consonant with the whole policy of France respecting the Free Corps. She had rejected the Prussian proposal for their suppression, which accompanied the plan of a Franco-Prussian mediation. On 29th August Montmorin stated to Eden that it was impossible to disarm the Free Corps, and on 11th September when stiff remonstrances came from London on this subject, he airily declared that France could no more control those troops than the waves of the sea.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 371.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires du Comte de Portes" (1824), 93.

<sup>3</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 234, 259.

<sup>4</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28061.

<sup>5</sup> "Drapmore P.," iii, 418.

<sup>6</sup> "F. O.," France, 25, 26. Eden to Carmarthen, 29th August and 11th September.

Is it surprising that the Pitt Ministry came to the conclusion that the real aim of the French Government was to amuse England and Prussia with fair words, until its partisans gained complete mastery in the United Provinces and forced the States-General to send to Paris a formal demand for help, with which the Court of Versailles could not but comply? Whether Montmorin was playing a double game, or whether his hand was forced by other members of his Cabinet, is far from clear.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the contrast between his fair professions and French intrigues in Holland inspired increasing distrust, and served to bring about the *dénouement* which shattered the prestige of the French monarchy.

It was long before the crisis came. Only by slow degrees did Pitt, Carmarthen, and Harris shake off distrust of Prussia. The length of time attending the transit of despatches between London and Berlin (eleven days on the average even in summer) dragged the negotiations. At Paris the Prussian envoy, Gortz, intrigued against the Anglo-Prussian understanding, and represented Eden as minimizing the insult to the Princess of Orange. At last Pitt sent to Eden a courteous but firm request for an explanation of his words, which had caused a sensation at Berlin. Of course Eden was able to explain them entirely to Pitt's satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> But it is clear that the mutual dislike at London

The feuds in his Ministry, and his consistently peaceful attitude, seem to have saved him from the charge of duplicity. French troops, disguised as Freebooters, were afterwards captured in Holland and had on them orders and instructions written by de Ségur, the French War Minister, who resigned in 1787 ("Auckland Journals," i, 259). It seems probable therefore that some Ministers egged on the French agents and the Patriots, while Montmorin strove to hold them in check. Louis XVI also used his influence to prevent a war with Prussia, which he disliked (see Gardien, "Traité," v, 17). The appointment of Loménie de Brienne to a kind of dictatorship was also to have made for peace; it coincides with the resolve, formed on 20th August (see Barral de Montferriat, *op. cit.*, 214), to recall Vélacq to The Hague; and on 31st August Montmorin signed with Eden a convention for ending irritating disputes in East Indian affairs. I have no need to go into that question; but it had been reported (e.g., by Eden on November 1786, Pitt MSS., i, 10) that the French were about to gain control of Dutch East India ports. Rumours to that effect had embittered the test in Holland, and they were laid to rest by that convention.

See the MSS. of P. V. Smith in the "Beaufort P." (Hist. MSS. Commission) 357, for the parts of Pitt's letter of 8th September, omitted, very largely, by the editor of the "Auckland Journals" (i, 191-2), also 37, i, 198.



and Berlin could have been ended only by the fears aroused by the action of France.

In order to remove the distrust prevalent at Berlin, Pitt and Carmarthen sent to that Court full copies of their correspondence with France, which convinced Frederick William of their good faith and the duplicity of Versailles.<sup>1</sup> He saw that France was dragging on the affair so that the approach of autumn might hinder the effective action of his troops. Suspicion of this helped to bring England and Prussia to accord. But the tidings which spurred on Pitt and Carmarthen to more decisive action came from The Hague. On 20th August Harris reported that a body of Free Corps was approaching that town, that he was preparing to leave it in haste, and had sent all important papers away. On hearing this news and perhaps that brought back by Grenville on 23rd August, the Cabinet resolved to send General Fawcett to Cassel to hire 5,000 Hessians for the help of the loyal Dutch provinces, and others for the British service—that detestable expedient which parsimony made inevitable at every alarm of war. Harris was also empowered to order up a British ship lying at Harwich, laden with gunpowder and stores for the help of the Stadholder's forces. On the same day Carmarthen instructed Ewart to warn the Prussian Court that, though we had agreed with France to suspend warlike preparations, yet we were ready to send out at least as large a fleet as France could possibly equip.<sup>2</sup> Ewart, in his reply of 4th September, stated that but for this encouraging news Frederick William might once more have wavered, owing to the insidious intrigues of the French party, and the discouraging reports which came from the Duke of Brunswick. The nerves of that veteran were unstrung by visions of the spectral camp at Givet, and he mourned over the unpreparedness of his own force at Wesel, which, he declared, could not march before 7th September.<sup>3</sup> These tidings had once more depressed the royal thermometer at Berlin; but the news from London came just in time to send the mercury up again. On 3rd September, then, Frederick William drew up an ultimatum to the

<sup>1</sup> Luckwaldt, 71.

<sup>2</sup> "P. O.," Holland, 17.

<sup>3</sup> "P. O.," Prussia, 11. Carmarthen to Ewart, 24th August.

<sup>4</sup> Luckwaldt, 80 n., here corrects one of many mis-statements in P. de Witt's "*Une invasion prussienne en Hollande*," 285, that the Prussians were ready to march by 20th July.

tates of Holland, and bade Hertzberg come to a close understanding with England. On 7th September he resolved to reject Thulemeyer, and urged the British Government to declare what forces it would set in motion if France attacked the Prussian army in Holland.'

Late on that day there arrived at Berlin news which ended the last hesitations of Frederick William. The Porte, long sitting under the yoke imposed by the Treaty of Kainardji, and irritated by the proceedings of the Czarina, had declared war on Russia. This came almost as a bolt from the blue. No one believed the Sultan capable of so much energy as to attack the Muscovites; and rumours spread at Vienna and Petersburg that this was due to British gold. The insinuation was probably false. As will appear in Chapter XXI, the Turks had been dragged into war, and relied on help from Sweden, perhaps also from Prussia. Undoubtedly their action greatly embarrassed Joseph II, who was bound by compacts with Russia, the enemy of Turkey, and with France, her friend. Late on 7th September Mettenstein pointed this out to Ewart, and added that Prussia and England ought at once to frame an agreement, and interfere effectively without fear of France.' 'This time the decision is final. Ewart reported that the news of Turkey's challenge to Russia caused all the more joy at Berlin as the party of Marie Antoinette had gained an ascendancy at Versailles, which implied the strengthening of the Franco-Austrian alliance and proportionate loosening of the ties linking Joseph II to Russia.' The reasoning was not sound; for it was probable that France, acting in close concert with the two Empires, would partition Turkey with a view to the seizure of Egypt and other commanding posts in the East.

Nevertheless, Prussia looked on the war in the East as giving her a free hand in the West; and on 7th September she decided to act in the Netherlands. Four days later a French voy, Groschlag, arrived in Berlin with offers, partly enticing,

Hertzberg, "Recueil des Traités," ii, 428-30; "F. O.," Prussia, 12. Ewart to Carmarthen, 4th and 8th September.

*Ibid.* 8th September.

"The prevailing opinion of this Court is the Emperor will . . . sacrifice alliance with Russia to that of 1756 [with France]" (Ewart to Keith, 14 September 1787. B.M. Add. MSS., 35539).

partly threatening, which might once more have drawn the wavering impulses of the King towards Paris.<sup>1</sup> But now, after many months of uphill fight, all the omens favoured the Anglo-Prussian cause.

On 13th September, before the refusal of the Prussian ultimatum by the Estates of Holland had been received, the Duke of Brunswick crossed the Dutch frontier. In Guelderland and parts of Utrecht the Prussians were hailed as deliverers; even the city of Utrecht opened its gates, owing to the cowardice of the Rhinegrave of Salm, who soon abandoned the cause for which he had blustered so long. Nowhere did the Free Corps make any firm stand. Even in Holland their excesses had turned public opinion strongly against them. It is said that the weather prevented the opening of the sluices; but the half-heartedness of the defence, and the eagerness of the Orange party for deliverance, probably explain the *débâcle*. When the Dutch have been united and determined, their defence of their land has always been stubborn. Now it was not even creditable; and this fact may be cited as damning to the Patriots' claim that they stood for the nation. On 20th September the Prince of Orange made his entry into The Hague amidst boundless enthusiasm. Sir James Harris also received a striking ovation, which rewarded him for the long months of struggle.

Now, while the Patriots were in consternation at their overthrow, our envoy clinched his triumph by persuading the Estates of Holland to reverse their previous acts against the Stadholder's authority, and to rescind a resolution which they had passed on 9th September appealing for armed aid from France. The cancelling of this appeal on 21st September was a matter of great importance, as it deprived France of a pretext for armed intervention. The receipt of this news at Versailles helped to cool the warlike ardour of the French Court.

There the temper of the Ministry had fluctuated alarmingly. The recall of Vêrac seemed to assure a peaceful settlement. But on 4th September Montmorin sent to Eden a despatch which ran directly counter to the British and Prussian proposals. It stated that the Dutch towns, where the Free Corps had forcibly changed the magistrates, "*ont déjà consommé la réforme; . . . c'est une affaire terminée.*" As for the Prince of Orange, he would do

<sup>1</sup> Wittichen, 92-4; also *ibid.*, 97, for the Anglo-Prussian Convention of 2nd October.

l to abdicate in favour of his son.<sup>1</sup> Pitt of course indignantly rejected both proposals; and his temper is seen in the phrase of letter of 14th September to Eden, that if France was determined to keep her predominance in the United Provinces, she must fight for it.<sup>2</sup>

An acute crisis now set in. While Carmarthen warned Montagu that England would not remain a quiet spectator of such intervention, that Minister on 16th September issued a declaration that France could not refuse the appeal for help which had come from the Estates of Holland. He charged England with having plotted the whole affair with Prussia, and asserted that, inconvenient though the time was now that the power of the Turkish Empire stood at hazard, France must in any case draw the sword.<sup>3</sup>

This Declaration drew from Pitt an equally stiff retort. In a circular despatch intended for all our ambassadors, which he himself drew up, he declared that England could not admit the right of France, owing to its treaty with the Dutch Republic, to support a party in one of the Provinces in a measure expressly disavowed by a majority of the States General; and that His Majesty has repeatedly declared the impossibility of being indifferent to any armed interference of France in the affairs of the Republic, which, if unopposed, must necessarily lead to consequences dangerous to the constitutional independence of those Provinces, and affecting in many respects the interests and security of his dominions. His Majesty has therefore found himself under the necessity of taking measures for equipping a considerable naval armament and for augmenting his land forces." Nevertheless he still desired "an amicable settlement of the points in dispute."<sup>4</sup> As many as forty sail of the line were immediately prepared for sea; and here we may see that Pitt's care for the navy ensured a preponderance which virtually decided the dispute.

In order to see whether war might be averted, George III suggested, on 16th September, that someone should be sent to Paris who could deal with the French Ministers better than Eden

<sup>1</sup> *Auckland Journals*, i, 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>3</sup> *F. O.*, "France, 26. Eden to Carmarthen, 11th and 13th September 1794. The original, in Pitt's handwriting, is in *F. O.*, "Russia, 15, dated 21st September, and inscribed "To all the King's Ministers abroad except Paris and The Hague."

did. Pitt therefore decided, on 19th September, to despatch Grenville, charging him distinctly to declare that Great Britain approved the action of the King of Prussia, and would resist an armed intervention by France; also that the settlement in the United Provinces must be such as to restore to the Stadholder his constitutional powers, and prevent the ascendancy of the party hostile to Britain. A secondary aim of Grenville's mission was the forming of a friendly understanding with France for the cessation of warlike preparations on both sides of the Channel - a proof of Pitt's watchful care over the exchequer.<sup>1</sup>

Montmorin received Grenville coldly on 28th September at Versailles; but his reserve was merely a cloak to hide his discomfiture. Nine days before he had assured Eden, in the confidence which followed on a private dinner, that "if the Estates of Holland should prove so defenceless, or so intimidated as to give way to whatever might be forced under the present attack, he would advise His Most Christian Majesty not to engage in war." If matters went more favourably he would advise him to draw the sword; but, as for his own feelings, he was weary of the Dutch Question, and only sought the means for getting rid of it creditably, so that France might turn her attention to another quarter, obviously the East.<sup>2</sup> Grenville, after hearing all this from Eden, and receiving the good news from The Hague, of course put the right interpretation on Montmorin's *non possumus*, and sought to facilitate his stately retreat. He was at once waved back. Montmorin would make no promise as to her course of action so long as the Prussians were in Holland. Even on the question of disarmament by the two Powers - a matter of the utmost moment to France - he would make no pledge, though Grenville strongly urged him to do so. Two more interviews passed with the same frigid negations; and on 3rd October Grenville returned to London, harbouring a shrewd suspicion that the actions of the Court of Versailles would on this occasion tally with Montmorin's words.

Such proved to be the case. France did nothing, to the unbounded disgust of her partisans in Holland. Amsterdam shut its gates and endured a short siege from the Prussians in the belief that help must come from Paris. Our diplomatic agent,

<sup>1</sup> "Dropmore P.,<sup>1</sup> iii, 426-36; E. D. Adams, *op. cit.*, 6, 7; "Huckingham P.,<sup>1</sup> i, 326-31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Eden to Carmarthen, 20th September.

A. Miles, writing from Liège on 1st October, reported that burgomasters of Utrecht and Goreum had passed through the city on their way to Paris in the conviction that "France would never leave them in the lurch, and that her troops would mainly march to the relief of Amsterdam."<sup>1</sup> Their consternation must have been great on reaching Givet to find that there was no camp there.<sup>2</sup> The truth then flashed upon them that the French agents had relied on bluster and the Free Corps. Disappointment at the inaction of the French Court probably hastened the surrender of Amsterdam, which opened its gates on 10th October. The capture by the Prussians of many French officers, who declared that they were acting for that Government, revealed the sinister conduct of some, at least, of the French Ministers, and of Vêrac.<sup>3</sup> A letter of Grenville to Pitt on 26th October 1787 shows the surprise and disgust of the British Ministers at this flagrant bad faith. He says he is "mortified" at finding that Ségur, Minister for War, had sent signed orders for parties of French artillerymen to march north to the frontier, and put themselves under the command of an adventurer named Esterhazy. "His (Ségur's) orders again expressly direct the march into Holland in disguise, and point out the places where the men are to be equipped with *habits de paysan* for this purpose."<sup>4</sup>

The surrender of Amsterdam gave the last blow to the war party at Versailles. Up to 14th October Pitt felt the utmost concern, as appears in his letter of that date to Eden; but the reply of that envoy three days later showed that Ségur and his colleagues now bowed to the inevitable. Their peaceful mood was doubtless confirmed by the evasive and discouraging answer given by Austria to the appeal for help.<sup>5</sup> The Emperor had no force in Belgium, but none too large to hold down that people. Moreover, the prospect of war with Turkey imposed a distraction at Vienna.

The chief danger now was that France would join Russia and

<sup>1</sup> "Dropmore P., iii, 435; "Mémoires de Dedem de Gelder," 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 435.

<sup>3</sup> "F. O.," Holland, 19. Carmarthen to Harris, 12th October; "Auckland MSS.," i, 234.

<sup>4</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 29475.

<sup>5</sup> "F. O.," Austria, 14. Keith to Carmarthen, 24th October 1787. On 14th September Joseph II informed Keith that he thoroughly approved of the Dutch settlement.

Austria in the dismemberment of Turkey. Fear of such a step haunted Pitt, who always surveyed the Dutch Question from the standpoint of India. Thus we find him on 8th October charging Eden to watch most carefully the attitude of France to the events in the East. The replies of that envoy were, as usual, reassuring. France, according to Eden, only desired peace, and the scheme of seizing Egypt was "wholly wild."<sup>1</sup> Pitt therefore decided to press forward, and to persuade France to give an unequivocal assurance of her pacific intentions, as a prelude to disarmament on both sides. His letter of 14th October to Eden on this topic shows a grip of essentials, together with a surprising *finesse*. While anxious to induce France to disarm at the earliest possible moment, he advised Eden to humour Alvensleben, the special Prussian envoy at Paris, and to convince him that we were giving Prussia firm support and were not disposed to patch up a premature settlement.<sup>2</sup> Evidently Pitt's interest in diplomacy, though belated, was keen.

After long correspondence with Berlin, and much demurring at Versailles, a Declaration and Counter-Declaration were drafted and signed by the British envoys and Montmorin on 27th October. The French document averred that, as it had never been the intention of the King of France to intervene in Dutch affairs, he now retained no hostile views in any quarter respecting them, and therefore consented to disarm.<sup>3</sup> This public denial of what had notoriously been the aim of his Government, and this promise to renounce all ideas of revenge on Prussia, sent a thrill of astonishment through the diplomatic world. Never had France so openly abandoned her partisans or so publicly proclaimed her impotence. If Pitt (as French historians have asserted) had persistently sought to humiliate the Court of Versailles, he could not have succeeded more completely. But this Counter-Declaration was merely the climax of a diplomatic game which had taken a threatening turn only since the beginning of September. The fact is that the French Ministers, and still more their agents in Holland, had precipitated the crisis by the actions of the Free Corps at the very time which proved to be most unfavourable for them. By their conduct they courted failure; but it was the outbreak of war in the East which made that failure complete and crushing.

<sup>1</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 217, 221.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 227, 228.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 255-8; "Ann. Reg." (1787), 283.

marvel of skill. As for Eden, he had little more to do than to obey orders, though he sometimes toned down the harsh phrases of Pitt and Carmarthen.<sup>1</sup> The action of the Prussians was trenchant, but it could not have been so but for their confidence in the promised support of the Sea Power. Pitt's fostering care of the national resources, and his rehabilitation of the navy had made it virtually impossible for the semi-bankrupt French State to enter single-handed on a war with Great Britain and Prussia. This was the determining factor in the problem; and every statesman at Paris, London, and Berlin knew it.

But something more than sound finance is needed in a complex and critical situation. There the qualities of foresight, tact, and determination are of priceless worth; and on all sides it was admitted that Pitt displayed them to a high degree. The restraint which kept Harris strictly within bounds until the fit moment arrived is not more remarkable than the boldness which reaped all possible advantages from the daring *coup* of the Princess of Orange. Eden wrote on 1st November, that he had *shuddered* at the courage of Pitt in braving the chances of a war with France.<sup>2</sup> But the young statesman knew how far he could go with safety; he discerned the essential fact that France could not fight, and that Montmorin adopted his negative attitude in order to hide that important secret. If Montmorin chose to justify her disarmament by assertions which were equally false and humiliating, that was a matter for him, not for the statesmen of Great Britain.

Pitt's conduct of this, his first great diplomatic campaign, shines all the more brightly by contrast with the vacillations of Frederick William and the stupendous blunders of the French Government. Adverting briefly to these last, we may note that France had little ground for interference so long as a majority of the States-General deprecated such action; and, thanks to Harris, that majority, except for a few days, held firm. The French Government therefore founded its hopes on the majority in the Province of Holland, and on the high-handed proceed-

<sup>1</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 264.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.



ings of the Free Corps, which it secretly abetted. Montmorin repulsed two overtures from Berlin because of the insistence of Prussia that those corps should be suppressed. This action it was, more perhaps than the resentment of Frederick William at the insult to his sister, which helped to bring Prussia and Great Britain into line. France also finally denied the right of Frederick William to gain reparation for that insult, though she at first recognized the justice of his claim. Further, when he sent forward his troops, she made ready for war, and then adopted the attitude of sullen resentment, which rendered a joint mediation by the three Powers impossible. This conduct in its turn implied the lapse of the Franco-Dutch treaty of 1785, and the triumph of British and Prussian influence in the United Provinces. Frenchmen also saw in this event another proof of the uselessness of the Austrian alliance on which Marie Antoinette had staked her popularity; and the *débâcle* in Holland was a deadly blow at the influence of that unfortunate Queen. Finally France admitted her defeat in terms at which friends and foes alike scoffed. Not without reason, then, did Napoleon afterwards assert that the French Revolution was due to three causes, the Battle of Rossbach, the Diamond Necklace scandal, and the ousting of French influence from the United Provinces in 1787. The judgement is curiously superficial in that it passes over the fiscal and agrarian evils which potently conduced to the great upheaval; but it reflected the opinion of that generation, which looked on deficits, dearths, and bread-riots as dispensations of Providence, of trifling import when compared with the decay in prestige of an ancient monarchy. Something may be said for this view of things in the case of France. For years that monarchy had lived on prestige. The surrender of October 1787 now proclaimed to the world its decrepitude.

With the events attending the restoration of the Stadholder's power and the constitution of the year 1747 we are not here concerned. Pitt had rightly refused to interfere until the efforts of the Patriots to establish French influence had become a positive danger to England. His interest in those troubles was largely grounded on naval and colonial considerations. If the United Provinces became an annexe of France, their fleet, their valuable colonies, and their once prosperous East India Company, would be cast into the balance against us. Now that this

danger was past, he sought to remove all chance of its recurrence by suggesting the formation of a treaty of alliance with the Republic. On 5th October the first proposal to this effect was framed at Whitehall on condition that the two States should assist one another in case of attack, and guarantee the possession of their territories; but from the outset the Foreign Office set its face sternly against any concession such as "Free Ships, Free Goods," on which the Dutch were likely to insist.

There was, however, another stumbling stone in the way. The Dutch felt keenly the surrender of Negapatam to Great Britain, and they urged that, as that sacrifice had been forced on them in 1784 for the greater security of our settlements in the Carnatic, its retrocession was a natural consequence and a pledge of the friendship now happily restored. The Pitt Ministry, however, viewed the matter in the cold light of self-interest, and rejected the demand, in spite of the reiterated assurances of the Prince of Orange, the new Grand Pensionary, Van der Spiegel, and other friends of England, that they could not otherwise accept the proffered treaty. Even Harris finally confessed his inability to bend their will, and he advised Pitt and Carmarthen not to imperil the alliance on this single detail. Prussia, he said, had given way at some points in her negotiations with the Dutch; and it was impolitic for us to be too stiff.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt, however, would not give way. Probably he considered that the Stadholder's party, now in power, needed our support more than we needed his; or he may have grounded his decision on the need of preventing the rise of any Power other than that of England in South India, where Tippoo Sahib was always a danger. He refused to do more than offer to negotiate on this question within the space of six months after the signature of the treaty. The negotiation was never even begun; and thus the treaty signed at The Hague on 15th April 1788 was always viewed with disfavour by the Dutch. The guarantee of the restored Stadholderate by Great Britain, and the promise of each State to assist in the defence of the possessions of the other, were in themselves quite satisfactory; but the compact lacked the solidity which comes only from entire confidence and goodwill.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28063. Harris to Pitt, 22nd February 1788.

<sup>2</sup> Martens, iv, 372-7; Garden, v, 89-92.

The formation of an alliance with Prussia in the same year also came about in a manner more brilliant than sound. Of course, in all such affairs each Power tries to bring the other over to its own standpoint; and much tugging must needs take place between a military and a naval State. Frederick William and his chief statesman, Hertzberg, had just achieved the first success of their careers, and largely owing to the firmness of Pitt. Assured of their supremacy in Germany and Holland, they now sought to guard against the dangers threatening them from the East. The news which came in the month of November 1787, that Austria would join Russia in her war with Turkey, caused the gravest concern at Berlin, and therefore enhanced the value of a British alliance. The growing weakness of France and the power of Pitt to handle a crisis firmly therefore put a new face on Prussian policy. Instead of waiting on Paris, the Berlin Cabinet looked more and more expectantly towards London.

Already Frederick William had signified his desire for a union with the Dutch "in order to pave the way to a Triple Alliance between England, Prussia, and Holland as soon as it may be possible to accomplish it."<sup>1</sup> But the Pitt Ministry, distrustful of an alliance with Prussia unless Russia also came in, treated this overture very coyly. From a letter which the first Earl Camden wrote to Pitt on 18th October, we gather that the Earl was far more inclined to such an alliance than Pitt had shown himself to be at a recent meeting of the Cabinet. Camden favoured the plan as tending to consolidate our influence in Holland—a matter of the utmost moment. "We have escaped miraculously," he writes, "from the most perilous situation we ever experienced, and shall be mad if we slip the opportunity of rooting out the French interest in that country for ever . . . and that will be compleatly effected by a Prussian alliance." It would also free Prussia from slavish dependence upon France. As for the fear that it would drive France to a close compact with Russia and Austria, the Earl treated that danger as remote.<sup>2</sup>

Carmarthen, and probably Pitt also, looked on the danger as real enough to give them pause. Not till 2nd December did Carmarthen return any specific answer; and then he expressed the doubt whether it was desirable to form a Triple Alliance then,

<sup>1</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 12. Ewart to Carmarthen, 27th September 1787.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 119.

There were rumours of a projected union between these three powers, which might become a reality if England, Prussia, and Poland coalesced.<sup>1</sup> If that hostile league were formed, it would not be desirable to come to terms, and even to include Denmark, Sweden, and the lesser German States. It is curious that it did not name Poland; but here we find the first definite sign of that league of the smaller States with Prussia and Great Britain which afterwards played so important a part in Pitt's foreign policy.

The caution of Pitt was justified. In a few days' time Sweden was knocking at our door, asking for admittance along with Denmark. The adventurous character of Gustavus III will appear in the sequel. Here we may note that Carmarthen completely waved aside this offer of alliance from a suspicion that Sweden was planning a blow at Russia.<sup>2</sup> The blow did not fall until the middle of July 1788; but then the sudden summons of the Swedish King to the Empress Catharine to hand back part of Russian Finland, and to accept his mediation in the Russo-Turkish War, showed the meaning of his proposal at Christmas 1787.

Only by slow degrees did the eastern horizon clear. But when France showed her resentment at the participation of Austria in the Turkish War, the spectre of a hostile Triple Alliance was laid; and then, but not till then, Pitt showed more favour to the Prussian proposals. Yet here again there was a touch of caution. The Eastern Question touched Prussia far more closely than England. If Joseph II gained his heart's desire—Moldavia and Wallachia—and Catharine extended her empire to the River Dniester, the greatness and even the safety of Prussia and of Poland would be hopelessly compromised.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly Prussia sought by all means short of drawing the sword to help the Turks in their unequal struggle. She concentrated large forces near the Austrian border, hinted that she would be glad to offer her mediation for the purpose of securing a reasonable peace, and sent an official disguised as a merchant on the way of Venice to Constantinople in order to encourage the

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 119. Carmarthen to Ewart, 2nd December 1787. Fraser, our envoy at St. Petersburg, reported on 1st November that Austria was proposing there a Triple Alliance, but it was coolly received ("F. O.," Russia, 15).  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Carmarthen to Ewart, 26th December.

<sup>3</sup> See Ewart's masterly Memorandum in "Dropmore P.," ii, 44-9.

Sultan to a vigorous prosecution of the war.<sup>1</sup> Hertzberg also urged the formation of a league between Prussia, England, and the smaller States with a view to the guarantee of the Turkish possessions in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

To this proposal the British Government gave no encouragement. So far as appears from the despatches of this year, the fate of Turkey was not a matter of much concern to Pitt and Carmarthen. Indeed, not until 2nd April did they vouchsafe an answer to the Prussian proposal of alliance; and then they based their acceptance on the need of safeguarding the situation in Holland. Other States, it was added, might be invited to join the Triple Alliance in order effectively to counterbalance the jealous efforts to which it might give rise; but Great Britain declined to bind herself to any guarantee of the Sultan's dominions. If he were in sore straits, Great Britain would support Prussia in gaining reasonable terms for him, but she would not favour any active intervention on his behalf. Still less would she support the notion (outlined by Hertzberg) that Prussia should acquire an indemnity for any gains that Austria might make in the present war.<sup>3</sup> The key-note of British policy was firmly struck in this sentence: "The great object which we have in view is the continuance of peace, as far as that is not inconsistent with our essential interests. It is with that view that the alliance of Holland has been thought so material, as rendering any attack upon us less probable. With the same view we are desirous of cultivating the closest connections with the Court of Berlin."<sup>4</sup> That is to say, the proposed Triple Alliance was to be a purely defensive league for the safeguarding of the three States and their colonies.

At Berlin, however, now that Catharine had finally waved aside the friendly offers of British and Prussian mediation, the Eastern crisis eclipsed all other topics. By degrees Hertzberg

<sup>1</sup> Luckwaldt, 100 *et seq.* Ewart found out the secret instructions issued to Dietz, and forwarded them to London on 8th April. They show that Prussia sought by all means to encourage the Turks, but laid her plans so as to get an indemnity in land in case Austria gained land in the south-east.

<sup>2</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 13. Ewart to Carmarthen, 15th March 1788.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Ewart to Carmarthen, 15th January 1788. Lecky (v, 232) assigns the first rumours of Prussian indemnities in land to January 1789; but Ewart reported the beginnings of Hertzberg's plan in January 1788.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Carmarthen to Ewart, 2nd April.

aid his plans for the aggrandizement of Prussia, whatever might befall the Turks.' As will appear more fully in a later chapter, we expected that Joseph II would gain the whole, or large parts, of Moldavia and Wallachia. The armed mediation of Prussia was to lessen these acquisitions; and as a set-off to them Austria must cede Galicia to the Poles; while their gratitude for the recovery of that great province, torn from them in 1772, was to show itself in the cession to Prussia of the important fortresses and districts, Danzig and Thorn, so necessary for the rounding off of her ragged borders on the East. Such was the scheme which took shape in Hertzberg's fertile brain, and dominated Prussian policy down to the summer of the year 1791.

The watchful Ewart forwarded to Whitehall details of this gigantic "deal" (if we may use the Americanism); and as the scheme came to light it aroused deep distrust at Whitehall. At once the Prussian proposal wore a new aspect; and the draft of a treaty drawn up in this sense in the middle of April left little hope of a settlement between the two Powers. In reply to its proposals Pitt and Carmarthen pointed out the vagueness of the Prussian suggestions respecting Turkey, but hinted that an opportunity might come for befriending the Sultan if he were too hard pressed. Further, while promising to help Prussia if he were attacked, they again demanded the like succour from her if any of our colonies were assailed. They also desired to bring into the league Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal. For the present, however, they sought to limit the Anglo-Prussian understanding to the Dutch guarantee, though a closer compact was to be discussed during the visit of the Prussian monarch to his sister at Louvain.<sup>1</sup>

This last suggestion was for Ewart himself. The others he was to pass on to Hertzberg. That Minister chafed at this further rebuff to his plans, which now comprised the offer of the armed mediation of Prussia, England, and Holland to Catherine and Joseph. The fondness of Frederick William for France once more appeared; and the French party at Berlin venomously raised its head. England, they avowed, would gain everything from this one-sided compact; for her colonies were to be found in every sea. Why should the troops of the great Frederick be

<sup>1</sup> See his letter of 24th November 1787 to Dietz at Constantinople in Hauser, "Deutsche Geschichte," i, 225-6.

<sup>2</sup> "F. O.," Prussia, 13. Carmarthen to Ewart, 14th May 1788.

set in motion to help the islanders every time that one of their colonial governors lost his temper? Finally the King declared that he would not send his troops beyond the bounds of Germany and Holland.<sup>1</sup>

There seemed little chance of an agreement between the two Courts, until Frederick William set out for his visit to the Prince and Princess of Orange at Loo, and let fall the remark that he hoped to see Sir James Harris there. Already that envoy had asked permission to come to London; and, with the zeal of a convert to the Prussian alliance, he convinced Ministers of its desirability, even if they gave way on certain points. The Instructions drawn up for him on 6th June set forth the need of an Anglo-Prussian alliance in order "to contribute to the general tranquillity." He was also to sound the Prussian monarch as to the inclusion of other Powers, especially Sweden and Denmark; but discussions on this matter were not to stand in the way of the signature of the treaty.<sup>2</sup> George III, now a firm supporter of peace principles, favoured the scheme, as appears from his letter of the same date to the Princess of Orange. He there stated that he approved of an alliance with Prussia, though there might not be time to gain the adhesion of other States; and he expressed the hope that this compact would lead Austria and France to desire the continuance of peace, and thereby conduce to the termination of war in the East.<sup>3</sup>

Fortified by these opinions of the King and Cabinet, Harris prepared to play the game boldly. His handsome person, grand air, and consciousness of former victories gave him an advantage in the discussions with Frederick William, who, thanks to the tact of the Princess, laid aside his earlier prepossessions against the "dictator," and entered into his views. In order to keep the impressionable monarch free from disturbing influences, Harris paid the sum of 200 ducats to a chamberlain if he would ensure the exclusion of a noted partisan of France, Colonel Stein, from the royal chamber during a critical stage in the healing process. The climax came during a ball on 12-13th June. After midnight the King sought out Harris, invited him to walk in the garden, admitted the force of his arguments in favour of an immediate signature of the proposed treaty, and allowed him to speak to his Minister, Alvensleben. While fireworks blazed

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* Ewart to Carmarthen, 27th and 31st May 1788; Wittichen, ch. xx.

<sup>2</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28063.

<sup>3</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 421.

courtiers danced, the two Ministers drew up a provisional treaty, to which the King assented on the following morning, 1 June 1788.

The news of the signature of the Provisional Treaty of Loo received at Berlin with an outburst of rage, when it appeared that nearly all the aims and safeguards striven for by Ministers and Francophiles had disappeared. Further negotiations ensued at Berlin; but they brought no material change to the Loo compact. The treaty signed at Berlin by Hertzberg and Ewart on 13 August 1788 was defensive in character. Each State promised to help the other, in case of attack, by a force of 20,000 men; but Great Britain was not to use such a force of Prussians inside Europe or even at Gibraltar. That contingent might be increased if need arose; or it might be replaced by a money equivalent. As was stipulated at Loo, the two Powers pledged themselves to uphold the integrity of the United Provinces and their present constitution, and to defend that State by all possible means, in case of attack, the Dutch also affording armed aid to either ally, if it were attacked. Two secret articles were added to the Berlin Treaty, the one stipulating that no military aid should be given to the party attacked unless the latter had not at least 30,000 men; the second provided that a British fleet should assist Prussia if the latter applied for it.<sup>1</sup>

Thus was formed an imposing league. The splendid army of Prussia, backed by the fleets and resources of Great Britain and the Dutch Republic, constituted a force which during three years was to maintain peace and assure the future of the smaller States. If we remember the state of woeful isolation of England in the summer of 1787, the contrast in her position a year later is startling. It came about owing to the caution of Pitt at a time when precipitate action would have marred everything. His wise delay in the early stages of the Dutch crisis, his diplomatic coyness in the bargaining with Prussia are all admirable.<sup>2</sup> The British envoys, Ewart and Harris (Keith Elphinstone deserves also to be named) were men of unusual

<sup>1</sup> The secret articles are in Ranke's "Fürstenthum," ii, 358; for the published treaties of 13th June and 13th August see Martens, iv, 382-5, 390-3; for the negotiations, Luckwaelt, 114-16, Salomon, "Pitt," 344-51. The accounts of these important events given by Tootline, Stanhope, and Lecky are brief and unsatisfactory.

<sup>2</sup> So Wittichen, 148.



capacity and courage; but then as now success depended mainly on the chief; and it has been shown that the guiding hand at Whitehall was that of Pitt.

His diplomatic triumphs recorded in this chapter were to have a marked influence on the future of Europe. It is not generally known how acute was the danger arising from the schemes of Catharine II and Joseph II. In popular imagination the premonitory rumblings of the French Revolution rivet the attention of the world to the exclusion of all else; but a perusal of the letters of statesmen shows that nine-tenths of their time were given to thwarting the plans of the imperial revolutionists. In truth French democracy could not have gained its rapid and easy triumphs had not the monarchies of Central and Eastern Europe shaken the old order of things to its base, so that even the intelligent conservatism of Pitt failed to uphold the historic fabric from the attacks that came from the East and the West. Well was it for Great Britain that her diplomatic position was fully assured by the autumn of the year 1788. For at that time lunacy beset her monarch, paralyzed her executive government, and threatened to place her fortunes at the mercy of a dissolute prince.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PRINCE OF WALES

Our Ministers like gladiators live;  
'Tis half their business blows to ward or give.  
The good their virtue would effect, or woe,  
Dies between exigents and self-defence.

Pope.

le [the Prince of Wales] has so effeminate a mind as to counteract his good qualities, by having no control over his weaknesses.

THE EARL OF MALMESBURY, *Diaries*, iv, 33.

A PRIME Minister of Great Britain needs to be an intellectual Proteus. Besides determining the lines of foreign and domestic policy, he must regulate the movements of a complex parliamentary machine, ever taking into account personal prejudices which not seldom baffle the most careful forecast. It is not surprising, therefore, to find statesmen at Westminster often slow and hesitating even when there is need of prompt decision. The onlooker may see only the public questions at issue. The man in the thick of the maze may all the time be holding the personal clue which alone can bring him to the open. How often has the fate of Europe turned on the foibles or favouritism of Queen Elizabeth, Louis XIV, Queen Anne, Charles XII, Catharine II. In the present age this factor counts for less than yore. Hence it comes about that many modern critics assess the career of Pitt as if he were in the position of a Gladstone. In point of fact he was more under royal control than Walpole or Godolphin. He had to do with a Sovereign who in the last resort gave the law to his Ministers, and occasionally treated them like head clerks.

True, George III interfered with Pitt less than with his predecessors. That masterful will had been somewhat tamed during the "bondage" to the Coalition, and almost perforce accepted the guidance of his deliverer. The King even allowed Pitt to go

his own way respecting Reform, Warren Hastings, and the Irish Commercial Treaty. Family scandals and family debts for a time overshadowed all other considerations, a fact which goes far to explain the bourgeois domesticity of his outlook on Dutch affairs. In these years, then, he acquiesced in the lead of the heaven-sent Minister who maintained the national credit and the national honour. But in the last resort George III not only reigned but governed. Thus, apart from the Eastern War, which we shall consider later, everything portended a time of calm in the year 1788, when suddenly the personal element obtruded itself. There fell upon the monarch a strange malady which threatened to bring confusion in place of order, and to enthrone a Prince who was the embodiment of faction and extravagance.

The career of the Prince of Wales illustrates the connection often subsisting between the extremes of virtue and vice. Not seldom the latter may be traced to the excess of the former in some primly uninteresting home; and certainly the Prince, who saw the light on 12th August 1762, might serve to point the moral against pedantic anxiety on the part of the unco' guid. His upbringing by the strictest of fathers in the most methodized of households early helped to call out and strengthen the tendencies to opposition which seemed ingrained in the heirs-apparent of that stubborn stock. In the dull life at Kew or Windsor, bristling with rules and rebukes, may we not see the working in miniature of those untoward influences—fussy control and austere domination—which wearied out the patience of Ministers and the loyalty of colonists?

Moreover this royal precisian was not blessed with a gracious consort. Queen Charlotte's youthful experiences at the ducal Court of Mecklenburg predisposed her to strict control and unsparing parsimony. Many were the jests as to her stamping with her signet the butter left over at meals. It was even affirmed that apple charlottes owed their name to her custom of using up the spare crusts of every day. These slanders (for the latter story fails before the touchstone of the term *Charlotte Russe*) owed their popularity largely to her ugliness. One of her well-wishers, Colonel Disbrowe, once expressed to Croker the hope that the bloom of her ugliness was going off.<sup>1</sup> This sin revealed

<sup>1</sup> "Records of Stirring Times," 58, by the authoress of "Old Days in Diplomacy."

atitude of others; and it is fairly certain that Queen Charlotte has been hardly judged. Some there were who accused her of callousness towards the King during his insanity; and a charge seems in part proven for the year 1804.<sup>1</sup> Others, however, charged her with unmotherly treatment of the Prince of Wales. Who can suffice for these things? Aristophanes coined a happy phrase to denote lovers of the trivial in politics. He called them "buzzers-in-corners." Those who essay to write the life of a great statesman must avoid those nooks.

One thing is certain. The Prince of Wales grew to dislike his father and mother. His temperament was far gayer and more romantic than theirs. Some imaginative persons have ventured to assert that a more generous and sympathetic training would have moulded him to a fine type of manhood. Undoubtedly his education was of the narrow kind which had suited the nature of George III; and when the King, with his tried obstinacy, continued to keep the trammels on the spirited youth of eighteen, he burst them asunder. At that time the Prince had his first amour (was it his first?), namely, the actress, "Perdita" Robinson.<sup>2</sup> The gilded youth of London, long weary of the primness of Windsor, cheered him in his further excesses, and Carlton House set the tone of the day. In vain did the King seek to regain the confidence and affection of his son.<sup>3</sup> His efforts were repulsed; and the debasement of Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, insured a prince to every kind of debauchery.

If this were not enough, the heir to the throne made a friend of the man whom his father most detested, Charles James Fox. Through that charming libertine the Prince became a member of the Whig Club, Brooks's;<sup>4</sup> and, as we have seen, helped to defeat the King's eager electioneering in the great contest of 1784 at Westminster. Thenceforth the feud between father and son was bitter and persistent. The Prince had all his father's wilfulness, and far more than his stock of selfishness.

Certain letters of the Earl of Liverpool recently sold in London show that there was an open breach between King and Queen in 1804, and that the King endeavored to patch it up.

<sup>1</sup> Hume, "Memoirs of George IV," i, 60-2.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's "Last Journals," ii, 360-1.

<sup>3</sup> Fox does not seem to have introduced the prince into bad company. See, ii, 367-9, and Hume, i, 122-3.

So far as is known, he showed no sign of repentance, but argued himself into the belief that the King had always hated him from his seventh year onward.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing that corroborates this petulant assertion. The King had been a kind and even doting father, his chief fault being that of guiding too long and too closely this wayward nature.

By the summer of 1783 the quarrel had waxed warm on the subject of the immorality and extravagance of the Prince. At that time the Coalition Ministry startled the King by proposing to grant the sum of £100,000 a year to the Prince of Wales, exclusive of the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall, which amounted to about £13,000 a year.<sup>2</sup> The King, having formerly received far less than that amount, considered it exorbitant. As we saw in Chapter VI, the Ministry would probably have fallen had not the Prince required his favourite to waive the proposal. Parliament then voted £30,000 to pay his debts, £30,000 to start his new establishment (Carlton House) and £50,000 a year out of the Civil List.

By the autumn of the next year the Prince defiantly proposed to travel abroad in order to ease his finances by evading his creditors. This the King forbade, and requested him to send in a detailed list of his expenses and debts. The result was a statement clear enough in most items, but leaving a sum of £25,000 unaccounted for. The King required an explanation of this, which the Prince as firmly refused to give, though he assured Sir James Harris it was a debt of honour. As the King refused to pass this sum, the whole matter dragged on, until in April 1785 the debts reached the total of £160,000. To escape the discomforts of his position, the Prince proposed to his friend, Harris, who was then in London, a term of residence at The Hague. The true reason for this proposal lies in the fact that the Prince had for some time been desperately in love with a fair young widow, Mrs. Fitzherbert, who was a Roman Catholic. In vain had he wounded himself as a sign of his undying passion for her; in vain had four of his friends sought to inveigle her into a mock marriage. In order to escape his importunities she had fled to the Continent; and the King refused him permission to pursue her.

Here, in truth, was the crux of the relations between father

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 228.

on. King George saw no hope for the youth but in marriage with a Protestant princess. Prince George as firmly decided that he would not marry "some German frow," and filled his brains with designs to secure the Roman Catholic choice. Mrs. Fitzherbert's religion, her position as a lover, and the anomaly of a morganatic marriage in these days, rendered any connection with her odious in the eyes of the King. Besides, the Royal Marriage Act of 1772 forbade marriage of any prince or princess of the blood under the age of twenty-six without the consent of the King. On all these points, then, the King had the Prince in his toils.

The Prince, realizing this fact, seems to have behaved as reckless as possible in the hope of compelling the King to allow him to go abroad and marry Mrs. Fitzherbert. Such at least is the charitable explanation of his early prodigalities. The King, surely, were a means of forcing the hand of his father. Prince George was not to be gulled in this way. He, too, held fast to his views, and the result was a hopeless deadlock. Pitt and Carmarthen sought to end it in May 1785. They threw up to Harris that the income of the Prince might be considered by Parliament if he would become reconciled to the King, cease to be a party man, and set about the discharge of his debts. Accordingly Harris waited on the Prince at Carlton House on 23rd May 1785, and suggested that on these conditions the Ministry would double his income, provided also he set apart £50,000 a year for the discharge of his debts. The Prince demurred, on the ground that he could not do so, and that the King's unfatherly hatred would be an obstacle to any such proposal. In support of the latter statement he requested Harris to read the King's letters to him, which were couched in severe terms, reprobating his extravagance and dissipation.

It is not easy to censure this severity. The gluttonous orgies of the Prince of Wales were a public scandal, especially in hard times, and Parliament withheld the money necessary for the promotion of Portsmouth and Plymouth. Both as a patriot and as a minister, George was justified in condemning his son's conduct, and it is clear that the hatred of the King for his son led him to put the worst possible construction on the Prince's words. At the close of his interview with Harris the Prince declared vehemently that he never would marry, and that he

had settled with his brother Frederick, Duke of York, for the Crown to devolve on his heirs.<sup>1</sup>

As illustrating the relations of father and son, I may quote an unpublished letter from Hugh Elliot to Pitt, dated Bright-helmstone, 17th October 1785, and endorsed by Pitt: "Shewn to the King."<sup>2</sup> In it Elliot states that he went to Brighton merely for bathing, but was soon honoured by the Prince's company and confidence. He had combated several of his prejudices, and this had not offended him; but the Prince asked him to discuss matters with the King's Ministers, who would then report to the King. He then adds:

"There is so much difficulty in putting upon paper the secret circumstances I have learnt, or in detailing the imminent danger to which H.R.H. is exposed from a manner of life that can be thoroughly understood only by those who are eye witnesses of it, that, out of respect to the Prince, I shall be justified in not dwelling upon so distressing a subject, but that I may be allowed to advance, that in my opinion H.R.H. risks being lost to himself, his family and his country if a total and sudden change does not take place. I will even venture to add that the Prince is at this moment not insensible that such a change is necessary and that it is one of the motives which make him desirous of visiting the Continent under such restrictions as the King may think proper to advise.

Elliot adds that the Prince would travel only with Colonel Lee and Slaughter and himself, if the King and Pitt approved of his going with him. The Prince hoped to reconquer and so win back the good opinion of the King and country. He (Elliot) would rejoice if he could further this course.

The desire of the Prince for foreign travel ended with the return of Mrs. Fitzherbert from her secret tour. The Prince's pursuit of her now became more eager than ever, and he succeeded in inspiring her with feelings of love. Consequently, on 15th December 1785, he secretly married her, having four days previously assured his bosom friend, Fox, that there was no "ground for these reports which of late have been so malevolently circulated." It is now proved beyond possibility of doubt that the marriage was legal (except in the political sense above noticed), and that the Prince did his wife grievous

<sup>1</sup> "Malmesbury Diaries," ii, 129-31.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 105.

wrong in persistently denying the fact.<sup>1</sup> She, with all the proofs in her possession, refrained from compromising him, and therefore had to endure endless slights. Many persons had the good sense to place her dignified silence far above his unblushing denials, and Society was rent in twain by the great question—"Was he married or not?" In view of these facts, is it desirable to present a full-length portrait of His Royal Highness? The wonder is that even in his *Perdita* days his name could ever be compared with the tenderest and most faithful of Shakespeare's lovers, Prince Florizel. That he allowed himself to be painted in that guise argues singular assurance. Was not Choten more nearly his prototype?

It would be interesting to know whether the King and Queen were aware of the secret marriage. The Queen in a private interview pressed him to tell the truth; but he probably equivocated. Their action bespeaks perplexity. In private they treated Mrs. Fitzherbert kindly, but never received her at Court.<sup>2</sup> That Pitt was not ill-informed on the subject appears from the following hitherto unpublished letter from his brother, the Earl of Chatham. It is undated, but probably belongs to the month of December 1785:

Hanley, Wednesday.<sup>3</sup>

My Dear Brother,

I have had a good deal of conversation with Sir C. . . on the subject you wished some information upon. The result of which leaves no doubt on my mind of the Prince, having not only offered to marry Mrs. F., but taken measures towards its accomplishment. Many circumstances confirm this opinion, but this much is, I think, certain information, which is that the letters from the P. offering it were shown by himself to Mrs. S. . . ., the mother, from whom Sir Carnaby has it immediately, and the letter from Mrs. F. to her mother, in which she informs her of her consent. Sir C. . . has seen an extract of, and is promised a copy of [it], which I shall see. It must, however, I think, still remain very doubtful, till the step is absolutely taken, whether it ever will, or whether it is more than a last effort to gain her without, but

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Wilkie, "Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV.," i, 21-103.

<sup>2</sup> *Edin.*, i, 135-7; Langdale, "Memoirs of Mrs. Fitzherbert," 127 B, 131, 142; *Jessie*, ii, 312, 314.

<sup>3</sup> Pitt Mss., 122. Sir Carnaby is Sir Carnaby Haggerston, who married Frances, the youngest sister of Mrs. Fitzherbert's mother. Her mother was a daughter of John Errington of the Northumberland family of that name. His brother was the *contaminé* of the Prince, as described above.



Sir C. and all her family seem perfectly convinced that he seriously and at all events intends it. They are averse to it; but the person in the P<sup>re</sup>s confidence upon it and most employed in it is Mr. Errington, husband of Lady Broughton. He is supposed to be the person who is to go over as her relation to be present at the ceremony. I have endeavoured to learn what I cou'd as to the point of whether she wou'd change her religion or not. She at present says she will not; but Sir C.—— seems to think that she might be brought to that whenever the marriage was declared. The present intention seems to be that it should be kept secret, but that, her conscience thus satisfied, she is to appear, and be received as, his mistress; and I believe it is pretty certain that he has a promise from a certain duchess to visit her and go about with her when she comes. . . .

Clearly the Earl of Chatham came very near the truth. Sir Carnaby Haggerston knew the secret, and chose to reveal a good deal of it. Mr. Errington was the bride's uncle, and gave her away at the secret ceremony at her house in Park Lane on 15th December.<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Devonshire early recognized Mrs. Fitzherbert, and frequently entertained her along with the Prince.

The *liaison* with Mrs. Fitzherbert (for it was ostensibly nothing more) of course did not lessen expenses at Carlton House. The Prince insisted on her moving to a larger residence and entertaining on a lavish scale. As for Carlton House, it "exhibited a perpetual scene of excess, unrestrained by any wise superintendence."<sup>2</sup> It was therefore natural that the Prince's friends should ply Parliament with requests for larger funds in the spring of 1786. The matter came up, not inappropriately, during debates on the deficiency in the Civil List. That most brilliant of wits and most genial of *boon companions*, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, had now espoused the Prince's cause. With his customary charm he dragged in the subject of the monetary woes of his patron, pointing out that the dignity of the Crown demanded an ampler provision and the payment of the existing debts. Pitt replied that this matter was not before the House, and added that, as he had received no instructions on the subject, he would not be so presumptuous as to offer any private opinion on it.

Undeterred by this freezing rebuke to Sheridan, Fox on the

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Wilkins, *op. cit.*, i, 97.

<sup>2</sup> Wroxall, iv, 306.

day raised the same question, maintaining that it was a national advantage for the Heir-Apparent to be able to live not only in ease but in splendour. This patriotic appeal fell on deaf ears. The country gentlemen who on the score of expense lately decided to leave Portsmouth and Plymouth open to attack, were not likely to vote away on the orgies of Carlton House an extra sum of £50,000 a year, which in fourteen years would have made the two great dockyard towns impregnable. Fox wisely refrained from pressing his demand, and refused no explanation as to how the nation would benefit from the encouragement of extravagance in Pall Mall.<sup>1</sup> Clearly the Prince's friends were in a hopeless minority. Accordingly he began more stoutly than ever to deny his marriage with Fitzherbert; but in such a case character counts for more than oaths and asseverations.

So the miserable affair dragged on. The King refused every request for help for the Prince, doubtless in the hope that debt would compel him to give up his mistress. The debts therefore grew apace, until in the summer of 1786 Carlton House was in danger of being seized by the brokers. It is clear that the King sided with the King. George III frequently commended Pitt for his wise advice; but unfortunately nearly all the letters from Pitt to his sovereign, especially on this topic, have since ago disappeared from the Library at Windsor, a highly ridiculous circumstance. We know, however, that, as early as March and April 1785, the King approved the messages drawn up by Pitt from the Sovereign to the Prince. In general they must have been drafted by the Minister; and the following, though in Pitt's writing, but dated by the King and with one slight correction, remains as proof that Pitt was the mouthpiece of the royal rebukes. It is endorsed "Draft of Letter from the King to the Prince of Wales":

WINDSOR, *July 8, 1786.*<sup>2</sup>

After so often repeating to the Prince of Wales the same sentiments on the subject of his applications, and with so little effect, I should add nothing further at present. But I must express my surprise at receiving a letter from him in which he states himself to be convinced that he has reason to expect either at present or in future the smallest assistance

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Hist.*, lxxv, 1348-56; *Wrexall*, iv, 304-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Pitt MSS.*, 101. For other references see the King's letters to Pitt in *Parl. Hist.* and *Napoleon Miscellanies*.

from me. A reference to my last letter<sup>1</sup> and to the former correspondence might shew him what it was I expected before I could enter further on the consideration of the business. If he chooses to interpret what has passed into a refusal on my part to take measures in any case for his assistance, the consequence of his doing so can be imputed only to his own determination.<sup>2</sup>

That the details of the expenditure at Carlton House were laid before Pitt is clear from the evidence contained in the Pitt Papers. The packet entitled "Prince of Wales's Debts," affords piquant reading. For, he it remembered, at the very time when Pitt was straining every nerve to lessen the National Debt, to rebuild the navy, and to enable England to look her enemies once more in the face, the Prince was squandering money on rare wines, on gilding, ornolu, and on jewellery for Mrs. Fitzherbert, £54,000 being considered a "not unreasonable bill" by her latest biographer.<sup>3</sup> An official estimate fixes the total expenditure of the Prince for the years 1784-86 at £369,977 (or at the rate of £124,000 a year) and yet there were "arrears not yet to hand." Parliament had voted £30,000 for the furnishing of Carlton House; but in 1787 the Prince consulted the welfare of the nation by accepting an estimate of £49,700 for extensions and decorations; and late in 1789 he sought still further to strengthen the monarchy by spending £110,500 on further splendours. They included "a new throne and State bed, furniture trimmed with rich gold lace, also new decorations in the Great Hall, a Chinese Drawing-Room, etc." The Pitt Papers contain no reference to the sums spent on the Pavilion at Brighton in the years 1785, 1786; but, even in its pre-oriental form, it afforded singular proof of the desire of the Prince for quiet and economy at that watering-place.

Much has been made of the retrenchments of July 1786, when the works on Carlton House were suspended, and the hall of that palatial residence was closed. Whatever were the motives that prompted that new development, it soon ceased, as the foregoing figures have shown. The Prince's necessities being as great as ever, he found means to bring his case before Parliament in the debates of 26th, 24th, and 27th April 1787. Thereupon Pitt clearly hinted that the inquiry, if made at all, must be made

<sup>1</sup> The King altered this to "written message."

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 105.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Wilkins, *op. cit.*, i, 161.

oroughly, and that he would in that case be most reluctantly given "to the disclosure of circumstances which he should otherwise think it his duty to conceal." The House quivered with excitement at the untactful utterance—one of Pitt's few mistakes in Parliament. Sheridan, with his usual skill and daring, took up the challenge and virtually defied Pitt to do his worst. Pitt thereupon declared that he referred solely to pecuniary matters.

Everyone, however, knew that the Fitzherbert question was really at stake; and the general dislike to any discussion, even of the debts, was voiced by the heavy Devonshire squire, who was as to find immortality in the "Rolliad." Rolle asserted on 20th April that any such debate would affect the constitution both in Church and State. Undaunted by Sheridan's salvos of wit, he stuck to his guns, with the result that on the 30th Fox fired off a seemingly crushing discharge. As Sheridan had declared that the Prince in no wise shrank from the fullest inquiry, the Whig chieftain now solemnly assured the House that the reported marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert was a low and malicious calumny. When the tenacious Devonian plied him with the final inquiry whether he spoke from direct authority, Fox replied with the utmost emphasis that he did.

We now know that Fox had been cruelly deceived by the Prince. But in that age the assertion of Fox was considered as almost final, save by those who marked the lofty scorn poured by Mrs. Fitzherbert on her unwitting traducer. In Parliament the victory lay with the Prince; but even there Rolle firmly refused to comply with Sheridan's challenging request and declare himself satisfied. To the outside world it was clear that either the heir to the throne or Fox had lied.

The letters of George III to Pitt in May 1787 and Pitt's suggestions for a settlement of the dispute, show that the perturbed monarch placed absolute confidence in his Minister. Very noteworthy is the King's assertion that there could be no reconciliation until his son consented to marry and to retrench his expenditure. His letter of 20th May 1787 to Pitt further proves that the proposal to add £10,000 to the Prince's income emanated from Pitt, and was acquiesced in somewhat reluctantly by the King.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter refutes the statement of Huish (*op. cit.*, i, 169) that Pitt was as pertinacious as the King in refusing to help the Prince.

This expedient brought about a partial reconciliation between father and son. On the strong recommendation of Pitt, Parliament allowed the extra £10,000 a year, besides granting £20,000 on behalf of the new works at Carlton House, and paying £161,000 towards the extinction of the Prince's debts, on his express assurance that he would not exceed his income in the future. The vote was unanimous. Thereupon the King waived the question of the Prince's marriage; so at least we may infer from the fact that they had a long interview on 25th May 1787 at the Queen's House (Buckingham House), at the close of which the Prince proceeded to greet his mother and sisters. The parents had few happier days than that; and their joy was crowned a little later by the return of Frederick, Duke of York, after a long residence in Germany. Fanny Burney describes the radiant gladness of the King and Queen as they paced along the terrace at Windsor with their soldier son; and the inhabitants of the royal city crowded to witness the pleasing scene. It speaks well for the Prince of Wales, that he posted off from Brighton on the news of his brother's home-coming, in order to double the pleasure of his parents. For a time, too, the Prince thought more kindly of Pitt; so we may infer from the statement of St. Leger to the Marquis of Buckingham that his feelings towards him had altered since the negotiation on the subject of his debts.<sup>1</sup> But these sentiments of gratitude soon vanished along with the virtuous and economical mood of which they were the outcome. Those who break their word naturally hate the man to whom they had pledged it.

In the winter of 1787-8 the two Princes again abandoned themselves to drinking and gambling. The dead set made against Pitt over the Warren Hastings trial and Indian affairs so far weakened his position that the Princes counted on his fall and hoped for the advent to power of the Fox-Sheridan clique. Certain it is that they drank and played very deep. General Grant, writing to Cornwallis, 6th April 1788, says:

The Prince [of Wales] has taught the Duke [of York] to *drink* in the most liberal and copious way; and the Duke in return has been equally successful in teaching his brother to lose his money at all sorts of play—*Quinze*, Hazard, &c—to the amount, as we are told, of very large sums

<sup>1</sup> "Dropmore P.," i, 362.

our of India General Smith<sup>1</sup> and Admiral Pigot who both wanted much. These play parties have chiefly taken place at a new club and this winter by the Prince of Wales in opposition to Brooks's, where Tarleton and Jack Payne, proposed by H.R.H., were black-

this new club, called the Dover House or Welzle's club, the often won or lost £2,000 or £3,000 at a sitting. In other Frederick sought to better his brother's example, so that company was thought *mauvais ton* by young nobles.<sup>2</sup>

Compared with these buffooneries, political opposition was all matter. But the King deeply resented the nagging of his son at any time of crisis. Such a time came in 1788, when a sharp dispute arose between Pitt and the India Company. It originated in the Dutch troubles of the previous summer. The prospect of war with France was such that the India Board sent out four regiments in order to strengthen the British garrisons in India. At the time the directors of the Company fully approved of this step; but when

Major-General Smith, M.P., was twice unseated for bribery. His nickname was "Hyder Ali."

*Cornwallis Corresp.*, i, 474, 375. Payne was a confidential friend of the Prince, who made him Comptroller of his Household and Lord Warden of the Stammeries in Cornwall.

*Buckingham P.*, i, 363, 364.

The Pitt MSS., 228, is a Memorandum, endorsed January 1794, entitled "A Plan for a new Arrangement of the Prince of Wales's Affairs." It states that his debts then amounted to £412,511 5s. 8d.; he owed £60,000 to Coutts the banker (Pitt's banker); and he might at any time be called upon to pay as much as £170,000. It would be difficult to induce Parliament to pay any part of these debts. Moreover, such a demand "would afford a topic of declamation to those who already use the expenses of Royalty as an engine to operate upon weak minds in order to effectuate their ultimate aim, the overthrow of everything dignified, everything sacred, everything noble and respectable in social life." The anonymous compiler therefore estimates the raising of a loan at 3½ per cent., so as to cover the "urgent" amounting to £349,511. Creditors would probably consent to the "amputation" of 20 per cent. from what was owed them and be content with 5 per cent. interest on the remainder.

Mr. W. Fitzwilliam, of 45, Sloane Street, in May 1795 suggested a plan for raising £2,100,000, of which £650,000 should go to the discharge of the Prince's debts, £1,000,000 to the archbishops for the forming of a new endowment for raising the stipend of every clergyman to £100 a year; £100,000 reserved as prizes in the lottery; and £50,000 to be set apart for

the war-cloud blow over, they objected to pay the bill. Pitt insisted that the India Act of 1784 made them liable for the transport of troops when the Board judged it necessary; and in February 1788 he brought in a Declaratory Bill to that effect.

At once the Company flung to the winds all sense of gratitude to its saviour, and made use of the men who four years previously had sought its destruction. Fox and Erskine figured as its champions, and the Prince of Wales primed the latter well with brandy before he went in to attack Pitt. The result was a lamentable display of Billingsgate, of which Pitt took no notice, and the Ministry triumphed by 242 against 118 (3rd March).

But the clamour raised against the measure had more effect two nights later, when Fox dared Pitt to try the case in a court of law. Instead of replying, Pitt feebly remarked that he desired to postpone his answer to a later stage of the debates. This amazing torpor was ascribed to a temporary indisposition; but only the few were aware that the Prime Minister had drunk deeply the previous night at the Marquis of Buckingham's house in Pall Mall in the company of Dundas and the Duchess of Gordon—that spirited lady whose charms are immortalized in the song, "Jenny o' Menteith."<sup>1</sup> Wit and joviality were now replaced by a heaviness that boded ill for the Ministry, whose majority sank to fifty-seven. Two days later, however, Pitt pulled himself and his party together, accepted certain amendments relating to patronage, but crushed his opponents on the main issue. To the annoyance of the Prince of Wales and Fox, the Government emerged triumphant from what had seemed to be certain disaster. Wraxall never wrote a truer word than when he ascribed Pitt's final triumph to his character. Even in his temporary retreat he had commanded respect, so that Burke, who hurried up exultingly from the Warren Hastings trial, was fain to say that the Prime Minister scattered his ashes with dignity and wore his sackcloth like a robe of purple.

The prestige of the Ministry shone once more with full radiance on the Budget night (5th May 1788). Pitt pointed out that the past year had been a time of exceptional strain. The Dutch crisis and the imminence of war with France had entailed preparations which cost nearly £1,200,000. The relief of the Prince of Wales absorbed in all £181,000. The sum of £7,000,000

<sup>1</sup> "Buckingham II," i, 361; Wraxall, iv, 458; v, 77-9.

been expended in the last four years on improvements in naval service. He had raised no loan and imposed no new taxes. Nevertheless, the sum of £2,500,000 had been written off in the National Debt, and even so, there was a slight surplus of £17,000. The condition of the finances of France supplied the Minister with a telling contrast. It was well known that, despite many retrenchments, the deficit amounted to £2,300,000. In these financial statements we may discern the cause of the French Revolution and of the orderly development of England. In vain did Fox and Sheridan seek to dissipate the hopes aroused by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So experienced a financier as Pulteney justified his statement, and the country at large felt assured of the advent of a time of abounding prosperity. As for France, the inability of her statesmen, even of Necker, to avert the crisis caused by reckless borrowing and increased taxation, seemed to be the best possible guarantee for success. Pitt's concern at the re-appointment of Necker in August 1788 appears in a letter to Grenville in which he describes it as "most the worst event that could happen—a curious remark which shows how closely he connected the power of a State with its financial prosperity." Thus the year 1788 wore on, with a deepening gloom for France, and with every appearance of calm and happiness for the Island Power, until a mysterious malady struck down the King and involved everything in confusion.

"Drapmore P," I, 353. Grenville replied on 1st September that he thought the frequent changes in France would undermine her power and so checked "that sort of intrigue and restlessness which keeps us in hot water in while we are most confident of the impossibility of any serious effect in their schemes." He then suggests an agreement as to the forces to be sent by the two Powers in the East (Pitt MSS., 140).



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE REGENCY CRISIS

Dost thou so hunger for mine empty chair  
That thou wilt needs invest thee with mine honours  
Before the hour be ripe?

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry IV, Part II.*

The line which bounded the royal prerogative, though in general sufficiently clear, had not everywhere been drawn with accuracy and distinctness.—  
MACAULAY.

THE causes of insanity are generally obscure. In the case of George III the disease cannot be traced to a progenitor, nor did it descend to his issue, unless the moral perversity of his sons be regarded as a form of mental obliquity. It is highly probable that the conduct of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York produced in their father a state of nervous tension conducive to, if not the actual cause of, madness. No proof of this is possible; but having regard to the King's despotic temper, his love of plain living, and his horror of gambling and debauchery, we may plausibly refer to a private cause the sudden breakdown of a strong constitution at a time when public affairs had become singularly calm.

Throughout the summer of 1788 he became steadily weaker. A stay at Cheltenham was of no avail. Indeed, an enemy of that place tried to assign the King's malady solely to its waters. The King had to forego the long walks and rides which had formerly tired out all his suite; and in October he returned to Kew much aged and broken. Nevertheless the indomitable will asserted itself in one curious detail. He always remained standing during interviews with his Ministers; and he is stated by George Rose to have kept on his feet for three hours and forty minutes during a portentous interview with Pitt, which must have strained his strength to the breaking

at! At the levee of 24th October at St. James's, he made a praiseworthy effort to appear well in order "to stop further and any fall of the stocks." But the effort was too great, Pitt perceived afterwards during a private interview.

Nevertheless, on the following day the King removed to Windsor. There the decline in health continued, so that, after ending a hunt, he exclaimed to Lady Effingham: "My dear Lady, you see me all at once an old man." Even so he continued his correspondence with Pitt much as usual, until on 1 November there came a sudden collapse.

Again we have to confess ignorance as to the final cause. Mrs. Papendiek, wife of the royal barber, ascribes it to the King's annoyance at the endeavour of the Duke of York to introduce foreign military instruments into the band of the Guards. Rose mentions a discussion with the Duke at dinner on the 5th, relative to a murder. All, however, are agreed that the merest trifles had long sufficed to make the King flurried and angry, as he frequently appeared during the drives with the princesses. His peculiarity now suddenly rose to the point where madness ensued. It is even said that at that dinner he without provocation suddenly rushed at the Prince of Wales, pinned him to the wall, and dared him to contradict the King of England. The Prince burst into tears, the Queen became hysterical, and it was with some difficulty that the King was induced to retire to his room. During that evening and night he raved incessantly, and the chief physician, Sir George Baker, feared for his life. A curious incident is mentioned by Mrs. Papendiek. She avers that on the following night the King arose, took a candle, and went to look at the Queen as she slept. She awoke in an agony of terror, whereupon he soothed her and seemed to take comfort in himself. We may doubt the authenticity of the incident, as also the correctness of Mrs. Papendiek's narrative when she describes the offensive air of authority which the Prince of Wales at once assumed, his demand of an interview with the Queen, even on

G. Rose, "Diaries," I, 86. The date of this interview is probably between 1 and 24th October 1788.

"Fanny Burney's Diary," iv, 122. In a rare pamphlet, "A History of the Royal Malady," by a Page of the Presence (1789), it is stated that the King, while driving in Windsor Park, alighted and shook hands with a man of an oak tree, asserting it to be the King of Prussia, and was with difficulty persuaded to remount.

political affairs, and his striking the floor with his stick to express displeasure.<sup>1</sup>

It is certain, however, that the behaviour of the Prince was far from seemly. He took the direction of affairs in the palace with an abruptness which caused the Queen much pain. "Nothing was done but by his orders," wrote Miss Burney; "the Queen interfered not in anything. She lived entirely in her two new rooms, and spent the whole day in patient sorrow and retirement with her daughters." Worst of his acts, perhaps, was the taking possession of the King's papers, a proceeding which his apologists pass over in discreet silence. Among these documents, we may note, were several which proved that Pitt had not seldom drafted the royal rebukes. In other respects the exultation of the Prince at least wore the veil of decency, therein comparing favourably with the joy coarsely expressed by his followers at Brooks's Club.<sup>2</sup>

Secret intrigues for assuring the triumph of the Whigs began at once. It is significant that that veteran schemer, the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, proceeded to Windsor on 6th November, at the Prince's command, and dined and supped with him. The ostensible object of their meeting was to consider the mode of treating His Majesty, who had been violent during the night.<sup>3</sup> But the design of the Prince was to detach from Pitt the highest legal authority in the land. To this he was instigated by Captain Payne, Comptroller of his Household, who wrote to Sheridan that Thurlow would probably take this opportunity of breaking with his colleagues, if they proposed to restrict the powers of the Regent.<sup>4</sup> Payne augured correctly. Thurlow had his scruples as to such a betrayal; but they vanished at the suggestion that he should continue in his high office under the forthcoming Whig Ministry.

This bargain implied the shelving of Lord Loughborough, who for five years had attached himself to the Whigs in the hope of gaining the woolsack. Had Fox been in England, it is unlikely that he would have sanctioned this betrayal of a friend in order

<sup>1</sup> "Court and Private Life in the Time of Queen Charlotte," by Mrs. Papendiek. 2 vols. (1887); vol. ii, *ad init.*

<sup>2</sup> "Buckingham P.", i, 342.

<sup>3</sup> G. Rose, "Diaries," i, 87.

<sup>4</sup> T. Moore, "Life of Sheridan," ii, 27, where Payne also suggests that Sheridan should question Pitt about the public amusements, as it would embarrass him "either way."

in over an enemy. But, with Sheridan as go-between, and the Prince as sole arbiter, the bargain was soon settled. Light had been thrown on these events by the publication of the *Test of Devonshire's Diary*. In it she says: "He [Sheridan] could not resist playing a sly game: he cannot resist the pleasure of acting alone; and this, added to his natural want of judgment and dislike of consultation frequently has made him commit his friends and himself."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was some sense of the unworthiness of Sheridan which led Fox, in the midst of a continental tour with Mrs. Armistead, to return from Bologna at a time which proved to be detrimental to his health. After a stay of only nine days, he arrived in London on the 24th, too late to stop the bargain with Thurlow, and he at once informed Sheridan that he had swallowed the bitter pill and felt the utmost possible uneasiness about the whole matter.<sup>2</sup>

The Whigs now had a spy in the enemy's citadel. At first Fox was not aware of the fact. The holding of several Cabinet meetings at Windsor, for the purpose of sifting the medical evidence, enabled Thurlow to hear everything and secretly to pass the news to the Prince. Moreover, his grief on seeing the Prince at a time when the Prince's friends knew him to be at his worst<sup>3</sup> was so heartrending that some beholders were reminded of the description of the player in "Hamlet":

Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function sulking  
With forms to his conceit.

Which at least was the judgement of the discerning few, who, like Fanny Burney, saw more real grief in the dignified composure of Pitt after that inevitably painful interview. Authority in respect of the royal patient was entrusted to Thurlow, who stood at the fountain head of knowledge. Yet these astute dealings and bargainings were marred by the most trivial of accidents. After one of the Cabinet Councils at Windsor, the ministers were about to return to town, when Thurlow's hat was not to be found. Search was made for it in vain in the bill chamber, when at last a page came up to the assembled

<sup>1</sup> *Süchtel*, "Sheridan," ii, 400.

<sup>2</sup> *Moore*, "Life of Sheridan," ii, 31-5; *Campbell*, "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," vii, 248, 239 (edit. of 1857).

<sup>3</sup> *Moore*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Ministers and exclaimed with boyish frankness: "My Lord, I found it in the cabinet of His Royal Highness." The flush which spread over the Chancellor's wrinkled visage doubled the effect of the boy's unconscious home-thrust.<sup>1</sup>

The question of the Regency has often been discussed on abstract constitutional grounds. Precedents were at once hunted up, namely, those of the years, 1326, 1377, 1422, and 1455, the last being considered on a par with the present case. But of course the whole question turned primarily on the probability of the King's recovery. Here it should be noted that George III had been afflicted by a mental malady for a few weeks in the year 1765, and that a Regency Bill was drafted but the need for it vanished.<sup>2</sup> This fact was not widely known, but it must have come to the knowledge of the Prince of Wales. In view of the sound constitution and regular life of the King, there were good grounds for hoping that he would a second time recover.

Nevertheless, the reports of Sir George Baker, on behalf of Dr. Warren and the other physicians, as sent to Pitt, were at first discouraging. As they have not before been published it will be well to cite them here almost *in extenso* from the Pitt Papers, No. 228. They are dated from the Queen's Lodge, Windsor:

*Nov. 6.* 9 o'clock: Sir George Baker presents his comp<sup>d</sup> to Mr. Pitt. He is very sorry to inform Mr. Pitt that the King's delirium has continued through the whole day. There seems to be no prospect at present of a change either for the better or worse. H.M. is now rather in a quiet state. *Nov. 8, 1788.* 8 o'clock: The dose of James's powder which the King had taken before Mr. Pitt left Windsor produced a gentle perspiration but no diminution of the delirium; a second dose taken six hours after the first, is now operating in the same manner but with as little effect upon the delirium. *Nov. 10, 1788.* 8 p.m.: H.M. has but little fever, is very incoherent, but without vehemence or bodily efforts, though his strength appears to be very little impaired. *Nov. 12, 1788:*—H.M. talked in a quiet but incoherent way the whole night and is this morning just as he was yesterday. He has eaten a very good breakfast. *Nov. 15, 1788.* 10 p.m.: H.M. has been deranged the whole day, in a quiet and apparently happy way to himself. *Nov. 16.*

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 251, who had the story from Thomas Grenville. See, too, Wilberforce, i, 386, 387.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. W. Hunt, "Political Hist. of England," x, 64-5.

11:—This morning his discourse was consistent, but the principle which it went for the most part founded in error. *Nov. 18*, 11:—H.M. had a good night, but the disorder remains unabated. 21:—H.M. has been . . . more than once under the influence of considerable irritation. *Nov. 22*. 10 a.m.:—H.M. is entirely deranged morning in a quiet good humoured way. *Nov. 22*:—H.M. shewed marks of a deluded imagination in the course of the day. In the evening he was more consistent.

Letter follows from the Queen, that she consents to the calling in of the Duke of Wellington.]

*Nov. 24, 1788*:—His Majesty passed the whole day in a perfectly rational state.<sup>1</sup> *Nov. 25, 1788*:—His Majesty was not enraged nor alarmed at the strict regimen under which he was put at 5 o'clock in the evening, but grew quieter and went to bed at 9 o'clock, and is now

from the outset Pitt viewed the case with grave concern, but he means hopelessly. This will appear from the following letters of Pitt, the former to Bishop Pretyman (Tomline), the latter to the Marquis of Buckingham:

Sunday, *Nov. 10, [1788].*<sup>2</sup>

DEAR BISHOP,

You will have heard enough already of the King's illness to be very uneasy. The fact is that it has hitherto found little relief from medicine, and, what is worst of all, it is attended with a delirium the use of which the physicians cannot clearly ascertain. On the whole there is some room to apprehend the disorder may produce danger to the King, but there is no immediate symptom of danger at present. The more to be dreaded is on the understanding. If this lasts beyond a certain time it will produce the most difficult and delicate crisis involved in making provision for the Government to go on. It must, however, be yet some weeks before that can require decision, but the King will be a truly anxious one. . . .

Yours,

Downing Street, *Nov. 15, 1788.*<sup>3</sup>

DEAR LORD,

I have not half time [sic] to thank you sufficiently for your kind and affectionate letter, and for the communication through it of your letter fixes the date of Pitt's letter to Grenville, headed merely "Friday morning," in "*Dropmore I.*" (i, 361). Pitt quotes the phrase "the King is perfectly maniacal," and adds "I begin to fear the physicians have been wrong in the right than we thought."

Pretyman MSS.

<sup>1</sup> Chevening MSS.

Grenville. You will learn from him that our last accounts begin to wear rather a more favourable aspect, tho' there is not yet ground for very confident hope. There is certainly now no danger to his life, but the other alternative, which there was some danger to apprehend, was, if possible, more distressing. It seems now possible that a total recovery may take place, but even on the best supposition there must still be a considerable interval of anxiety. . . .

Grenville, a man of singularly calm and equable temperament (which procured for him the Speakership of the House of Commons on the decease of Cornwall early in the next year) waxed indignant as he described to his brother the tactics of the Opposition. On 20th November he declared: "The Opposition have been taking inconceivable pains to spread the idea that his [the King's] disorder is incurable. Nothing can exceed Warren's indiscretion on this subject."<sup>1</sup> The conviction gained ground that the Royal physicians were in league with the Prince; and so high did feeling run that shouts were flung at them. "So much the worse for you if he does not recover." This exasperation of spirit waxed apace as the jubilation of the Prince's friends became insolently patent. Indeed more terrible than the lunacy itself was the spectacle of the intrigues to which it gave rise.

As the reports privately sent to Pitt by the physicians were far from hopeless, he determined to await developments as long as possible before taking any decided step. On 15th November he proposed to the Prince of Wales that Parliament, instead of meeting in the following week, should be adjourned for a fortnight, to which there came a ready assent.<sup>2</sup> On the 17th he asked leave to inform the Prince of what he proposed to do on the meeting of Parliament, but an interview was not accorded. Eight days later the Prince inquired whether he had any proposal to make, but was answered by a polite negative. The uneasy truce between them evidently neared its end.

In his resolve to sift to the bottom the nature of the disease and the probability of a cure, Pitt advised the calling in of his father's doctor, Addington, and he carried his point. On the 28th and 29th the Prime Minister himself saw the Monarch, who was pleased to see him, referred to questions discussed at their last interview, and showed incoherence chiefly in wander-

<sup>1</sup> "Buckingham P.," ii, 9.

<sup>2</sup> G. Rose, "Diaries," i, 87.

ing incessantly from one topic to another,<sup>1</sup> a characteristic of the converse of polite Society, which, if judged severely, would warrant the consignment to Bedlam of half of its most cherished talkers.

All observers are agreed that the King conversed quite rationally at times, as was also the case in the attack of 1801.<sup>2</sup> Pitt therefore resolved to do nothing which would distress the King in the event of his recovery. This it was which led him to decline all idea of a coalition with the Whigs, and to insist on restricting the authority of the Regent in regard to personal matters on which the King laid stress. The removal of the monarch to Kew House seems to have been the wish of the Prince as well as of the Cabinet; and it took place without mishap on 29th November.

Six days later Parliament re-assembled, and rarely has it had to face problems so novel and delicate. In contrast with other nations, England had been singularly free from the perplexities attendant on a Regency; but now she had to face them in an acute form. The monarch was not unpopular, and his heir was distrusted. Yet it was indisputable that, as Regent, he could choose his own Ministers; and his hatred of Pitt implied the dismissal of that Minister and the triumph of Sheridan, Fox, and the roystering set at Brooks's. Pitt felt little doubt on this point and calmly prepared to resume his practice at the Bar. The sequel must have been a sharp conflict between the Prince's friends and the nation; so that the fateful year 1789 would have seen the growth of a political crisis, less complex than that of France, it is true, but fully as serious as that from which the nation was saved by his timely decease in the summer of the year 1830. All this was at stake, and much more. For who shall measure the worth to the nation of the frugal and virtuous life of George III, and who can count up the moral losses inflicted on the national life by his son in his brief ascendancy?

The King's physicians having been examined by the Privy Council on 3rd December, their evidence was laid before Parliament on the following day. While differing at many points, they agreed that recovery was possible or even probable, but they could not assign a limit of time. Adopting a suggestion of Fox,

<sup>1</sup> G. Rose, "Diaries," i, 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 94; "Buckingham P.," i, 446; "Quarterly Rev.," cv, 490.



Pitt moved for the appointment of a Committee of the House for the examination of the physicians. It comprised twenty-one members selected from two lists suggested by the Ministry and the Opposition. The reading out of the final list led to a singular scene. Not much comment was made on the twenty names, but before reading out the last name, Pitt paused for a moment. At once the Opposition raised cries of "Burke." Still Pitt remained silent. The cries were renewed more loudly. He then very quietly proposed Lord Gower. Burke threw himself back in his seat, crossed his arms violently, and kicked his heels with evident discomposure.<sup>1</sup> The annoyance of the great Irishman was natural, as Pitt had evidently prepared to inflict the slight. The Upper House appointed a similar committee.

The report based on this inquiry was presented by Pitt to the House of Commons on the 10th. It comprised the evidence, not only of the royal physicians, but also of an outsider, the Rev. Dr. Francis Willis who, during twenty eight years had supervised some 600 cases of lunacy at his residence near Boston. Everyone admitted his success in this trying work, which may be ascribed to the influence of a commanding personality, and the firm and judicious treatment which he substituted for the frequently violent methods then in vogue. He at once pronounced the case far from hopeless; and, if we may trust the stories told of the King and his new physician, there was even at the outset very much of method in the madness. Thus, on being informed that Willis was a clergyman, the patient remarked that he could not approve of his taking to the practice of medicine. This drew from Willis the remark that Christ went about healing the sick, whereupon the retort at once followed — "Yes; but I never heard that he had £700 a year for doing so." The acuteness of the King's faculties also appears in his remark that a letter which he had written to the Queen would not reach her, as his recent missive to the Duke of York had not been answered. Thereupon Willis offered to take it himself, and caused great joy to the sufferer by bringing back an affectionate letter in reply.

Yet the King soon felt the domination of his will. This appeared when the royal patient refused to go to bed. As the King petulantly resisted, Willis raised his voice in commanding tones which ensured complete submission. The trust which

<sup>1</sup> "Bland Burges Papers," 118.

is reposed in the King led him to lengths that were sharply rebuffed. When the sufferer expressed a desire to shave himself and complained that a razor and even a knife had been withheld from him, Willis at once replied that he was sure His Majesty had too strong a sense of what he owed to God and to make an improper use of it. He therefore brought a razor, and kept the monarch under his eye until the growth of five weeks was removed. This tactful treatment speedily wrought a marked change. Willis was far more sanguine than other attendants.<sup>1</sup> In his evidence before the Committee on December 1, he stated that the irritation was already subsiding, and that nine-tenths of his patients who had been similarly afflicted recovered, generally within three months from first seizure.<sup>2</sup>

Willis's words aroused the liveliest hopes. In vain did the Queen's party and the physicians scoff at the assurance of the "interloper." The Queen and the nation believed in him; and his report greatly strengthened Pitt's hands in dealing with the Regency. The more we know of the motives that influenced votes in Parliament the more we see that they turned on the opinions of the doctors. The desertion of the Duke of Devonshire to the Prince's party was due to a long conversation which he had at Windsor with the pessimistic Dr. Warren.<sup>3</sup> The conduct of the Prime Minister was cautious and tentative. On December 1, after presenting the medical evidence, he secured the appointment of a committee to investigate preceedents. At once Fox started to his feet and poured forth a vehement remonstrance. What need was there for such an inquiry? It was merely a pretext for delay. The heir-apparent of mature age and capacity. He had as clear a right to take the reins of government and to exercise the sovereign power during the King's illness as he would have in case of death. Parliament had only to determine when he had the right to exercise it; and as short a time as possible should elapse before the Prince assumed the sovereignty.

Here, as so often, Fox marred his case by his impetuosity. He watched him narrowly, and remarked exultantly to his

<sup>1</sup> See his private reports to Pitt in "Pitt and Napoleon Miscellanies."

<sup>2</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 607, gives the period as three months; "Hucklingham," ii, 47, gives it (erroneously, I think) as five months.

<sup>3</sup> "Wraxall," v, 243.

neighbour: "I'll *un-Whig* the gentleman for the rest of his life." With eyes flashing defiance, he denounced his assertions of the right of the Prince to assume the Regency as a breach of the constitution, implying as they did that the House could not even deliberate on the question. They must therefore in the first place assert their own rights.

Fox at once rose, not to soften, but to emphasize his previous statements. He questioned whether Parliament had the power of legislating at all until the royal power were made good. Now that the King had been admitted to be incapable, their assembly was a Convention, not a Parliament. He next asserted that the Regency belonged of right to the Prince of Wales during the civil death of the King; and "that it could not be more legally his by the ordinary and natural demise of the Crown." This was tantamount to saying that English law recognized lunacy as death, in which case an heir could at once possess the property of a lunatic father, and a wife be divorced from an insane husband. Of course this is not so.<sup>1</sup> Fox concluded by asserting that, if Parliament arrogated to itself the power of nominating the Regent, it would act "contrary to the spirit of the constitution and would be guilty of treason."

Pitt, on the contrary, affirmed that the Prince had no such claim to the Regency as would supersede the right of either House to deliberate on the subject. He even ventured on the startling assertion that apart from the decision of Parliament "the Prince of Wales had no more right (speaking of strict right) to assume the government than any other individual subject of the country."<sup>2</sup> This phrase is generally quoted without the qualifying clause, which materially alters it. Pitt surely did not mean to deny the priority of the claim of the Prince, but rather to affirm the supreme authority of Parliament; the statement, however was undeniably over-strained. In the main he carried the House with him. In vain did Burke declaim against Pitt, styling him a self-constituted competitor with the Prince. "Burke is Folly personified," wrote Sir William Young on 22nd December, "but shaking his cap and bells under the laurel of genius."<sup>3</sup> The sense of the House was clearly with the Prince Minister, and the committee of inquiry was appointed.

At the outset, then, Fox and his friends strained their con-

<sup>1</sup> May, "Constitutional Hist.," i, 148.

<sup>2</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 709.

<sup>3</sup> "Buckingham P.," ii, 71.

as to breaking-point. In a technical sense their arguments be justified by reference to the dead past; but they were touch with the living present. Fox himself had admitted no precedent could be found for this problem. A practical man would therefore have sought to adapt the English constitution (which is a growing organism, not a body of rigid to the needs of the present crisis. By his eager declaration he left this course open for Pitt to take; and that great Whig took it with masterly power. He resolved to base his case on the decisions arrived at in the Revolution of 1688-9, a century earlier which had affirmed the ascendancy of the House of Hanover in all questions relating to a vacancy in the Crown and a disputed succession. Men said that he was becoming a Whig, and Fox a Tory.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately he had to do with early indiscreet opponents. After Fox had prejudiced the Prince's cause, Sheridan rushed in to mar its prospects further. In the debate of 12th December he ventured to tell Pitt of the danger of provoking the assertion of the Prince's claim to the Regency. Never did Sheridan's hatred betray him into a more disastrous blunder.<sup>2</sup> His advertisement once turned it to account:

I have now [he said] an additional reason for asserting the authority of the House and defining the boundaries of "Right," when the defective faculties of Parliament are invaded and an indecent menace is brought down out to awe and influence our proceedings. In the discussion of the question I trust the House will do its duty in spite of the great that may be thrown out. Men who feel their native freedom will not submit to a threat, however high the authority from which it comes.<sup>3</sup>

We must here pause in order to notice the allegations of Mr. Sichel against Pitt. That distinguished historian asserted that the conduct of the Prime Minister towards the Prince "was the first as haughty and unconciliatory as possible"; he says that the plan of a Regency should have been submitted to the Prince before it was laid before Parliament; further,

Sichel, "Sheridan," ii, 415.

thought the Duchess of Devonshire's friends. Sichel, "Sheridan,"

Moore, "Life of Sheridan," ii, 42, 43; "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 730.

that, in defiance of the expressed wish of the Prince, "Pitt insisted on bringing the question of the Prince's right to a formal issue and obtaining a vote denying it."<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to see on what grounds this indictment rests. Surely it was the duty of the Privy Council and Parliament first to hear the medical evidence and to decide whether the need for the Regency existed. That was the purport of the debate of 10th December, the details of which prove conclusively that it was Fox who first, and in a most defiant way, brought up the question of the Prince's right to assume the Regency. Pitt, in a temperate and non-committal speech, had moved for a "Committee of Inquiry," whereupon the Whig leader flung down the gauntlet for the Prince; and two days later Sheridan uttered his threat.<sup>2</sup> Their auditors must have inferred that they acted with the sanction of Carlton House. In any case, the Prince's friends, not Pitt, provoked the conflict. When the glove was twice cast down, the Prime Minister could do nothing else but take it up and insist on having that question disposed of; otherwise Parliament might as well have dissolved outright. We may admit, however, that the intemperate conduct of Fox and Sheridan led Pitt to assert the authority of Parliament with somewhat more stringency than the case warranted.

To the contention, that the Prince ought first to have been consulted on the proposed measure, I may reply that such a course would have implied his right to dictate his terms to Parliament; and that was the very question which Pitt wished to probe by the Committee of Inquiry. Further, the historian's assertion, that Pitt laid the Regency plan before Parliament before submitting it to the Prince, is disproved by the contents of Pitt's letter of 15th December, published in full by Bishop Tomline.<sup>3</sup> In it the Prime Minister expressed his regret that his words and intentions had been misrepresented to His Royal Highness; for on several occasions he had offered to wait on him but had received an answer that he (the Prince) had no instructions for him. He denied the accuracy of the report that he was about on the morrow to submit to Parliament his plan for the Regency. His motion merely affirmed the right of Parliament to deliberate on the present emergency; but the course of the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, v, 148.

<sup>2</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 705-13.

<sup>3</sup> Tomline, "Life of Pitt," ii, 388-92. There is a copy of this in the Pretymann archives at Orwell Park.

the debate had compelled him to outline his ideas. They were that the Regency should be vested in the Prince, with power of freely choosing his Ministers, unrestrained by Council. He had declined, and begged still to decline, to share the other powers, because the House might reject his proposals as to its right to deliberate on the present crisis. If he obtained its approval, he would be honoured by the Prince's permission to state to him the opinions which, after due inquiry, the Ministers were able to form on the further proposals that might be submitted to Parliament.

Was this language "arrogant" and "unconciliatory"? Could the Minister show more tact in seeking to harmonize the functions of the monarchy and of Parliament? Far from bringing his plan out and dried before Parliament and then foisting it on the Prince, Pitt was compelled by the attack of Fox to announce his plan in Parliament, but he stated his views to the Prince courteously, and at the earliest opportunity. The only possible alternative was to allow the Prince to take the Regency into his own hands and override the powers of Parliament. It is also noteworthy that not until the next day (16th December) did Pitt move three Resolutions on the subject, these were of a preliminary character, affirming the right of the House of Commons to take steps for meeting the present emergency.<sup>1</sup>

It should further be noted that the declaration of the Prince's wishes of his wish not to press his right was not made until the debate of 15th December in the House of Lords. The Duke of York, in a very tactful speech, said that his brother understood too well the sacred principles which seated the Emperor of Brunswick on the throne of Great Britain ever to attempt to exercise any power, be his claim what it might, not derived from the will of the people, expressed by their representatives and their Lordships in Parliament assembled."<sup>2</sup> If Lord York and Sheridan had treated the question in this way, there would have been no dispute. On the other hand the Prince does not seem to have sent a reply to the Prime Minister's missive; his discourtesy probably led to the discontinuance of further

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Hist.*, lxxvii, 732-37. The date is given wrongly as 1st December; it should be 16th December. So, too, on p. 778, are the numbers in the division which should be: for Government, 268, Opposition, 204.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 678.

communications from Pitt until that of 30th December, soon to be noticed.

The debates in the House of Lords were generally of small interest. But that of 15th December was memorable, not only for the tactful speech of the Duke of York noticed above, but also for the astute balancings of Thurlow. By the middle of December that political Blondin had seen the need of retracing his steps. As has already appeared, Fox strongly disapproved of shelving Loughborough in order to win Thurlow; and the clamour of the Whig peer, added to the arguments of Fox, led the Prince of Wales to retract his promise to the Chancellor. Even this, perhaps, would not have turned him had he not come to believe that Warren was wrong and Willis was right. Discerning a balance of gain in favour of fidelity to the King, he played that part with an emotion peculiarly affecting in so rugged a nature. His shaggy eyebrows rose and fell with great solemnity, as he deprecated these discussions on the "right" of this or that member of the constitution. They should await the inquiry into the precedents of the case. Meanwhile their duty was to preserve the dignities of the monarch intact until he should recover. Feelings of loyalty and gratitude imposed that duty, and particularly on himself, the recipient of so many benefits, "which whenever I forget, may God forget me."<sup>1</sup> Two men who listened to that climax expressed their feelings with diverse emphasis. Pitt, who knew all but the latest developments of the Thurlow-Sheridan intrigue, exclaimed, "Oh! the rascal." In Wilkes a sense of humour, unclouded by disgust, prompted the witticism: "Forget you! He'll see you damned first."

On 30th December, that is, seven days before the preliminary proposals for a Regency came before the House of Commons, Pitt drafted his suggestions in a most deferential letter to the Prince of Wales. In brief they were as follows. Ministers desired that the Prince should be empowered to exercise the royal authority, the care of the King and the control of his household being, however, vested in the Queen. The Regent, also, could not assign the King's property, grant any office beyond His Majesty's pleasure, or bestow any peerage except on the King's

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 680. That Thurlow or his friends expected his dismissal, even late in the year 1789, appears from a letter of Pitt to George Rose contradicting a rumour to that effect (G. Rose, "Diaries," i, 98, 99).

on after attaining their majority--restrictions which merely  
 red the belief that the King's illness was only temporary.  
 a time (the dawn of 1789) there were clear signs to this  
 and Willis drew up a report laying stress on his partial  
 ry; but, on his pressing Warren to sign it, the Whig  
 ioner refused.

s opened the most fateful of all years of modern history.  
 Whigs, the erstwhile guardians of popular freedom and the  
 of Parliament, were straining every nerve to prove the  
 hopelessly insane, to foist upon the English people a hated  
 with unrestrained powers, as if Parliament had no voice  
 matter, and to discredit the Prime Minister by represent-  
 a conduct as unconstitutional, and his letter to the Prince  
 silent.

best brains of the party were also concentrated on the  
 f inventing for the Prince a telling and dignified rejoinder.  
 al philosophy, law, and wit, came to his aid in the form of  
 Loughborough, and Sheridan. Or, rather, the first two  
 d the reply, which Sheridan then touched up. The  
 at Irishman pronounced the effusion of his sager com-  
 "all fire and tow," and that of the jurist "all ice and  
 Fox, it seems, was to have revised the result; but the  
 s of Devonshire House on New Year's Day detained  
 ry" far into the night; and the document, hastily copied  
 s. Sheridan, was hurried off to Carlton House without the  
 sed recension at Holland House or Brooks's Club. Fox  
 rious at this neglect, and called his friend names which  
 ter preferred not to repeat to the Duchess.<sup>1</sup>

h was this famous concoction. Connoisseurs, unaware of  
 ets, have confidently pronounced it the mellow vintage of  
 . Indeed, it is probable that the body of it may be his,  
 the bouquet may be Sheridan's and the dregs Lough-  
 gh's; but, the personal ingredients being unknown, it is  
 s to attempt a qualitative analysis. One thing alone is  
 a, that the Prince wrote not a word of it, but merely signed  
 r copy when made out by Mrs. Sheridan. Thereupon the

Sichel, "Sheridan," ii, 421-3. I cannot agree with Mr. Sichel (*ibid.*),  
 that the letter was Sheridan's. The Duchess's diary shows it to have  
 joint production. For the so-called Prince's letter see "Parl. Hist.,"  
 89-912, or "Ann. Reg." (1789), 298-302. For Pitt's reply see Stanhope,  
 9.



expectant Junto planned its public tapping, as an appetizing foretaste of the political wisdom of the new *régime*, Pitt meanwhile being dubbed a Republican and an insidious weakener of the executive power.

In more ways than one the situation was piquant. The *volte face* of parties was odd enough. Pitt seemed about to impair the strength of the hereditary principle and to exalt the power of Parliament; while the Whigs, who vehemently assailed the kingly prerogative in 1784, now as ardently belauded it in the person of the Prince. This contradiction extended even to details. Amidst all his appeals to precedents respecting a Regency, Pitt must in reality have resolved to discard them; and all research into the customs of the then almost absolute monarchy must have strengthened the case of those who scolded him for resorting to this device. But, in truth, all these inconsistencies vanish when we remember that the questions at issue were primarily medical and personal. Pitt's whole policy was therefore one of delay.

Owing to the death of the Speaker, Cornwall, and the subsequent election of William Grenville as his successor, the debates on the Regency were not resumed until 6th January; and ten more days elapsed before other preliminary questions were disposed of and the ministerial proposals were laid before the House. They were in substance the same as those submitted to the Prince on 30th December, except that a Council was now suggested for the purpose of assisting the Queen in the guardianship of the King and the regulation of the royal household.<sup>1</sup> It would be tedious to follow the course of the very lengthy debates which ensued. Ministers carried the Resolutions in both Houses; and the Prince somewhat grudgingly consented to act as Regent on the terms now proposed.

At the end of January Ministers proposed to legalize the proceedings of Parliament by the issue of letters patent under the Great Seal. A Commission was also appointed for the purpose of giving the royal assent and affixing the Seal to measures passed by the two Houses.<sup>2</sup> In spite of a vehement protest by

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 946-7. Able speeches on the Government side were made by the Speaker (Grenville) and the Solicitor General, Sir John Scott, the future Lord Eldon. See Twiss, "Life of Lord Eldon," i, ch. ix.

<sup>2</sup> See May, "Constitutional Hist.," i, 155, 156, for the arguments for and against this proposal.

that he worshipped the gods of our glorious constitution, and never bow down to Priapus (Thurlow), these proposals were rejected. Not until 5th February were preliminaries discussed; and Pitt then produced his Regency Bill. As it happened, the Opposition marred its own prospects by these dilatory tactics; for in a fortnight's time it was known that the need for a Regency had vanished.

The importance of these debates centres in the treatment of a complex question by the two great rivals, Pitt and Fox. The conduct of the former has been sufficiently outlined. It is to say a few words on that of Fox. Few of his speeches are more ingenious than those on the Regency. As a forcible defence of a weak case they have few equals. But the House of Commons is rarely won over by a dazzling display of "tongue-gloss."

It demands to see the applicability of arguments to the conditions of the time. This has been its peculiar excellence. Fox's arguments are rarely lit up with the radiance of immortal truth, but they are suffused with the comforting glow of the domestic hearth. Fox forgot this. In contrast with the accepted doctrine, he put forth claims which, if pressed to their logical conclusion, would have implied the restoration of monarchy in the pre-Revolution type. If it was true that the Prince of Wales could demand the Regency as a right, or even as a claim, free from all restrictions, how much more could he govern independently of Parliament? A Regent is to be what the moon is to the sun—a merely borrowed and borrowed splendour. Apart, then, from an inconsistency of conduct highly damaging to a statesman, Fox committed the misadventure of pledging himself to a scheme of government which was obsolete but unworkable.

Who plodded through the wearisome debates on the Regency must be conscious of an air of unreality. The references to the precedents of the House to the cases of Edward VI or Mary II were, after all, illusory; for in those times the powers of the monarch were ill defined. The nearest parallel to the case was supplied by the events of 1688; and though Fox might appeal to certain forms observed by the Convention of that year, the significance of those events undoubtedly lay in the assertion of the supremacy of Parliament in the event of a temporary lapse of the royal power. The argument for the supremacy of Parliament in all doubtful cases

acquired redoubled strength from the Act of Settlement of 1701, which set aside hereditary right in favour of the House of Brunswick.

The arguments of Fox as to the inherent right of the Prince of Wales to the Regency must therefore be pronounced archaically interesting but inconclusive for any member of the reigning dynasty. The fact that they were adopted by the Irish Parliament adds nothing to their force; for that body was known to act more from corrupt motives or from opposition to George III and his Lord-Lieutenant, the Marquis of Buckingham, than from monarchical zeal.<sup>1</sup>

The divisions in the Parliament at Westminster were also much influenced by similar considerations. The numbers of those who went over to the Prince's side were surprisingly large. Among the Peers, the cases of the Marquis of Lothian and the Duke of Queensberry attracted especial notice, as they had received many benefits from the King. Of those helped on by Pitt, Lord Malmesbury and Gerald Hamilton (commonly known as "Single-Speech" Hamilton) were the worst defaulters. The former, after calling on Pitt to assure him of his devotion, suddenly "ratted" to the Prince and sent a very lame letter of excuse. To this Pitt replied that he had certainly misunderstood every expression in their late interview, and begged his Lordship to act in any way he thought fit without troubling to send an apology.<sup>2</sup> Malmesbury sought to appease his friend Carmarthen by offering to call and discuss things in the old way; but, if he had lost his esteem, he would prefer to retire and feed goats on a mountain "out of the reach of d—d Kings and d—d Regents."<sup>3</sup> What Carmarthen thought of the defaulters appeared in his witty reply to someone who asked how it came about that Fox had let the cat out of the bag so soon—"To catch the rats, I suppose."

The pamphlet literature that sprang up at this crisis is highly interesting. The hacks employed by the Opposition persistently accused Pitt of aiming at dictatorial power—a theme on which

<sup>1</sup> For the intrigues and corruption at Dublin see "Dropmore P.," i, 385, 389, 395, *et seq.* The majority at Dublin dwindled away as soon as the King's recovery was known (*ibid.*, i, 417-25), a fact which damages Lecky's case.

<sup>2</sup> "Blind Burgea P.," 116, 117; *Wrexall*, v, 242, 243.

<sup>3</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 28064.

richly embroidered, despite the well-known fact that he was preparing to resume his position as a barrister. It is somewhat significant that, while the nation warmly supported Pitt, he was bitterly assailed by Grub Street and Soho. Anonymous writers confidently foretold his ascendancy and the ruin of England.

"A few years, perhaps, and our boasted commonwealth will be numbered among the governments that cover the earth with the awful ruins of edifices once consecrated to the rights and happiness of the human kind."<sup>1</sup> A "Private Citizen" urged the signing up of an address to the Prince begging him to take the royal power as a "simple and obvious mode of restoring the constitutional government to its full vigour."<sup>2</sup> A hurried patriot declared that he knew of "but one alarming Regency, which would be that of ambitious Ministers voting themselves in power."<sup>3</sup> Another citizen, surely of Jacobite tendencies, proved that no man in the universe could appoint a Regent; for he assumed office solely by hereditary right. As for "Regent Ministers," they would every day prostitute the dignity of the Crown in the heat of the hostilities of debate, and the state of England would soon be worse than that of Poland.<sup>4</sup> Similar in tone is an "Address to the Citizens who had resisted the Claim of the late House of Commons to nominate the Ministers of the Crown." The writer insists that only sophistry can deny that the sole question now is whether Pitt and his colleagues shall be invested with the royal authority with unlimited powers and for an indefinite period.<sup>5</sup> These insinuations harmonize with those which Buckingham found in circulation at Dublin; that the King had long been insane, but Pitt had concealed the fact in order to govern without control; and that the plan of a restricted Regency was the outcome of the same lust for power.<sup>6</sup>

The falsity of these charges is obvious. Whether the Regency was a right or a trust, the Prince of Wales in the middle of January was about to become Regent; and if he chose to risk

*Reflections on the Formation of a Regency* (Dehrett, 1788), 17.

*Thoughts on the present Proceedings of the House of Commons* (Dehrett, 1788), 18.

*Answer to the Considerations on . . . a Regency* (Dehrett, 1788), 1.

*A short View of the present Great Question* (Dehrett, 1788), 11-15.

*ibid.*, p. 6. Thibaut, "Memoirs of George IV," I, 202, repeats some of these charges against Pitt.

*Drummond's*, I, 377.

a conflict with Parliament he might at once dismiss Pitt and summon Fox to his counsels. On this all-important question there were no restrictions whatsoever. The restrictions solely concerned the relations between the Regent and the King, with two exceptions. These were the entrusting the Great Seal to a Commission; and the forbidding the Regent to create Peers except among the royal family; and here the aim obviously was to prevent the Prince obstructing legislation and swamping the House of Lords with his own nominees.

That the Prince did not dismiss Pitt was due, not to the lack of legal power to do so, but to the opportune recovery of the King. As appears by the reports of Dr. Willis, his health steadily improved throughout February. It is clear that Fox, who was drinking the waters at Bath, disbelieved the official bulletins on this subject and looked forward to a lease of power; for he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 17th February in terms of jubilation at the decision of the Irish Parliament, and added: "I hope by this time all idea of the Prince or any of us taking action in consequence of the good reports of the King are at an end: if they are not, do all you can to crush them. . . . I rather think, as you do, that Warren has been frightened. I am sure, if what I hear is true, that he has not behaved well. . . . Let me know by the return of the post on what day the Regency is like to commence."<sup>1</sup> From this it is obvious that the pessimism of Dr. Warren was not uninfluenced by political considerations.

The Prince was either better informed or more cautious than his favourite. On that same day a bulletin appeared announcing the King's convalescence. The signatories included Dr. Warren, who speedily fell into disgrace with the Prince's friends. On the 19th, at the request of the King, Thurlow had an interview with him and informed him of what had happened during his illness. We may be sure that the Chancellor's narrative illustrated that power of language to conceal thought which Talleyrand held to be its choicest function. Thurlow, on his return to town, moved the adjournment of the debate on the Regency Bill, which proved to be the beginning of the end of that measure.

A still severer test of the King's powers was afforded by his interview four days later with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. The Queen was present the whole time, and political

<sup>1</sup> "Memorials of Fox," ii, 302.

topics were of course avoided. Grenville asserts that after that interview the Princes drove straight to Mrs. Armstead's house in Park Street in hopes of finding Fox there and informing him of the King's condition. Certain it is that, according to Willis's report to Pitt, "the Princes expressed great astonishment and satisfaction to Colonel Digby after their interview with the King, remarking only one or two trifling circumstances in which they thought His Majesty was not perfectly right. The King has been perfectly composed since, and his anxiety to see Mr. Pitt increases to that degree that probably Mr. Pitt will receive a message to that purport to-morrow morning."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly Pitt saw his sovereign on the 24th, and found him calm and dignified, without the slightest sign of flurry or disorder of mind. He spoke of his illness as a thing entirely past, and with tears in his eyes thanked all those who had stood by him. Even his emotion did not derange his faculties or mar his equanimity.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile at Westminster the Opposition sought to vie with their rivals in expressions of loyal joy at the King's recovery. Viscount Stormont and other deserters to the Prince's side hastened to avow their satisfaction; and the Duke of York displayed some skill in depicting the heartfelt joy which filled his heart and that of his royal brother: sentiments which they further proceeded to illustrate by plunging into a round of orgies.<sup>3</sup> In the Commons Fox sought decently to draw a veil over the disappointment of his partisans.

The Providence which watches over the affairs of mortals sometimes wills that the *dénouement* of a problem shall come with dramatic effect. It was so now. The recovery of the King occurred in the very week to which the Prince's friends were eagerly looking forward as the time of entry into his enchanted palace.<sup>4</sup> Their chagrin, at the very moment when the paeans of triumph were on their lips, recalls the thrilling scene in "Paradise Lost," where the fiends are about to acclaim Satan at the end of the recital of his triumph over mankind,

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 128. This is the last of Willis's reports to Pitt. It is undated, but must be of 23rd February. Willis ceased to attend the King on 11th March; but was at Windsor a short time in April and May.

<sup>2</sup> "Buckingham P.," ii, 125.

<sup>3</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 1393-5; "Buckingham P.," ii, 122, 123.

<sup>4</sup> "Auckland Journals," ii, 208, 209.

and raise their throats for the shout of victory, when, lo, the sound dies away in

A dismal universal hiss

issuing from thousands of forms suddenly become serpentine.<sup>1</sup>

Such (if we may compare small things with great) was the swift change from exultation to disgust which came over the Prince's friends. Shortly before the critical day, the 10th, they had declared that, were the Regent in power only for twelve hours, he would make a clean sweep of all official appointments. Indeed, from the outset, he and his followers had let it be known that no mercy would be shown to the Pitt Administration and its officials.<sup>2</sup> There is a manifest absurdity in the assertion of Sir Gilbert Elliot, that Ministers and their adherents looked on the Prince's following "as a prey to be hunted down and destroyed without mercy."<sup>3</sup> Up to the 10th of February this phrase aptly described the aim of their rivals. So early as 15th December 1788 Sheridan informed the Marquis of Buckingham that the Prince intended to dissolve Parliament both at Westminster and Dublin; for the Opposition "could not go on with the old one in England; and the choice of a new one in Ireland would give them a lasting advantage, *which is true*."<sup>4</sup> The large powers of patronage entrusted to the Regent would have influenced very many votes at the General Election, just as the prospect of princely rewards caused many place-hunters to change sides in the two Houses.

The lavishness of this form of bribery appears in a letter written by Sydney to Cornwallis about 20th February, wherein he asserts that the following promotions in the army were all but *officially* announced. *Four Field-Marshal, thirty one Generals, twenty Lieutenant Generals, twelve Major Generals, besides many Colonels and lower grades; also ten new Aides-de-camp*—almost all for political reasons. It was further known that Portland would be Prime Minister; Stormont and Fox, Secretaries of State; Loughborough, Chancellor; Sandwich or Fitzwilliam, First Lord of the Admiralty; Spencer, Lord

<sup>1</sup> "Paradise Lost," x, 564-17.

<sup>2</sup> "Cornwallis Corresp.," i, 419.

<sup>3</sup> "Life of Sir G. Elliot," i, 272.

<sup>4</sup> "Drapmare P.," i, 382.

<sup>5</sup> The Prince promised this post to Sandwich; but on the remonstrance of the Duke of Portland and Fox, waived the point (W. Stichel, "Sheridan," ii, 415, 416).

tenant of Ireland; Northumberland, Master-General of the Ordnance; Fitzpatrick, Secretary at War; Sheridan, President of the Board of Control.<sup>1</sup> We may note here that Northumberland and Lord Rawdon (afterwards the Earl of Moira) with their followers had formed a group standing somewhat apart, acting with the Prince's friends on consideration of gain-office. They were called the Armed Neutrality; and their proceedings bore no small resemblance to a political manoeuvre, in which the Prince of Wales knocked down offices for the sake of a promotion.<sup>2</sup>

The abrupt ending to these intrigues and bargains brought some relief to every patriot. Independent observers, like Lord Albemarle and Wyvill, had felt deep concern at the prospect of the rule of the Prince and Fox. "I very much fear," wrote Lord Albemarle to Wilberforce, "that the King's present derangement is likely to produce other derangements not for the public benefit. I hope we are not to be sold to the Coalition faction." Lord Albemarle also wrote to Wilberforce: "Cabal I doubt not is labouring under his [Fox's] direction to overturn the present Government, while you and the other firm friends of Mr. Pitt are making equal exertions to prevent a change of men and measures. I think the general opinion is that the Prince has acted like a rash young man, that he is capable of being led into dangerous measures, and that men whom the nation greatly disesteem have all his confidence and esteem."<sup>3</sup>

The public opinion was, however, influenced by something more than distrust of the Prince and his favourites. By this time the nation confided entirely in the good sense and disinterestedness of Pitt. The Marquis of Buckingham expressed the general opinion when he called Pitt "the honestest Minister he ever saw."<sup>4</sup> Those qualities never shone more brightly than in the perplexing problem of the Regency. If he transferred the Prince, it was in order to assert the supremacy of

*Cornwallis Correspondence*, i, 410. Another and more probable version was that Fitzwilliam would be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Burke had striven to obtain the India Board of Control, "for the services and adherents of thirty years." So wrote James Mafferson to John Robinson. He added: "If they agree, all the fat will be in the fire. A hint to the Prince to prevent it, for I plainly see his object is to carry on business as usual as he can." (*Aberdeen Correspondence*, i, 700.)

*Cornwallis Correspondence*, i, 422. <sup>2</sup> *Life of Wilberforce*, i, 190, 191. <sup>3</sup> *Dropmore Papers*, i, 163.



Parliament, and to prevent personal changes at Windsor which would probably have brought about a return of the King's malady. For himself, he prepared quietly and with dignity to resume his practice at the Bar. Had the recovery of George III been delayed another week, the Minister would have been found once more at Lincoln's Inn, looking on with his wonted serenity at the wholesale changes in the official world brought about by the vindictiveness of his rivals. So near was England then to the verge of a political crisis which would have embattled the nation against a Government foisted upon it by an unscrupulous Prince and a greedy faction.

Fortunately the crisis was averted; and, thanks to the wise measures taken by Pitt, the recovery of the royal patient was not interrupted by the sight of new faces around him at Kew and Windsor. Long and laboured explanations were afterwards offered to the King by the Prince of Wales, in which he had the effrontery to refer to the pain caused him when he "saw Her Majesty set up by designing men as the head of a system" which was "a device of private ambition."<sup>1</sup> After this he never was trusted or fully forgiven either by the King or Queen. Their confidence and that of the nation was heartily accorded to the Minister whose conduct had been as loyal and consistent as that of Laurentius in Pitt's early dramatic effort. Friends pointed to his simple and earnest regard for the public welfare throughout the whole dispute. By those qualities he peacefully solved a tangled problem and bound together the King and the people in a union of hearts such as had not been known since the accession of the House of Brunswick. On the evening of the day when George III resumed his regal functions, London was ablaze with illuminations which extended from Hampstead to Clapham and Tooting.<sup>2</sup> The joy of all classes of the people brimmed over once more at the Thanksgiving Service held at St. Paul's Cathedral on 23rd April, when the demonstrations of loyalty were such as to move the King to an outburst of emotion. The part played by Pitt was not forgotten. With difficulty he escaped from the importunities of his admirers, who had to content themselves with dragging his carriage back to his residence in Downing Street. Outwardly, this day marks the zenith of his career. True, he was to win one more diplo-

<sup>1</sup> "Memorials of Fox," ii, 329.

<sup>2</sup> Wraxall, v, 336.

matic triumph over the House of Bourbon, the importance of which has been strangely under-rated. But already there was arising on the horizon a cloud, albeit small as a man's hand, which was destined to overcloud the sky and deluge the earth. Only ten days after the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's there assembled at Versailles the States-General of France, whose actions, helped on by the folly of the French princes, led to the subversion of that august monarchy. By so short an interval did the constitutional crisis in Great Britain precede a convulsion which was destined to overturn nearly every Government in the civilized world.

## CHAPTER XIX

### AUSTRALIA AND CANADA

The outcasts of an old Society cannot form the foundation of a new one  
*Parl. Report of 28th July 1785.*

The more enormous of our offenders might be sent to Tunis, Algiers, and other Mahometan ports, for the redemption of Christian slaves; others might be compelled to dangerous expeditions, or be sent to establish new colonies, factories, and settlements on the coast of Africa and on small islands for the benefit of navigation.—W. EDOEN, *A Discourse on Punishment*

THE first settlement of the white man on a Continent where all was strange might seem to be a topic more engaging, as well as more important, than the escapades of a selfish young prince and the insanity of his father. But the piles of printed paper respecting the affairs of Carlton House and the Regency attest the perennial preference of mankind for personal topics; and its disregard of wide issues that affect the destinies of nations is seen in the mere scraps of information concerning the early colonization of Australia. The statement of the late Sir John Seeley that the British people founded an Empire in a fit of absence of mind is nowhere more true than of the events of the years 1787, 1788, which marked the beginning of a new epoch of expansive energy.

There is a curious periodicity about the colonizing efforts of the British race. At one time the islanders send forth swarms of adventurers and make wide conquests. At another time the colonies languish for lack of settlers; so that one is tempted to compare these movements, albeit slow and irregular, with those of the blood in the human organism. They have had beneficial results. The contracting impulse has prevented that untimely diffusion of the nation's energies which leads to atrophy of the essential organs. But when these are once more in full vigour they can do naught else but send forth their vitalizing streams.

this systole and diastole the nation recovers strength and uses that strength. The variation of effort is doubly efficient. It prevents the too great effusion of life-blood which debbled Portugal in the sixteenth century; and the recurrence of the colonizing instinct has saved England from the undue absorption in domestic affairs which until recently narrowed the life of France.

The terrible drain of the American War naturally concentrated the attention of Britons for some time on home affairs. The most imperious need of the body politic was rest; and, as we have seen, Pitt used all his tact and energy to bestow and prolong that boon. Fortunately, the loss of life had been slight. The loss of money rather than of men put a stop to colonizing attempts and induced the belief that they weakened the State. But life-blood was there in abundance, ready to flow forth as confidence returned and the will was quickened.

Meanwhile, for want of a firm and intelligent lead, the experiment began slowly and awkwardly. As is well known, it was excess of population, of a particular type, which led the authorities to take action. The savage penal code of that age hanged or hurled in great numbers who would now escape with a small

As many as 100 offences were punishable with death, and this gives the measure of the code, in its less Draconian enactments. Indeed, but for sleepy Dogberries, and reluctant juries, a tenth part of the population might have lodged in the gaols which formed the fruitful seed-bed of crime. Goldsmith in his "Vicar of Wakefield" asks whether the licentiousness of our people or the stupid severity of our laws was responsible for the numbers of our convicts doubling those of the penal lands. The question impelled John Howard and his allies to their life-long efforts.

Meanwhile the State continued to avert the need of building new gaols by extending its time-honoured methods, hanging and transportation.<sup>1</sup> During the years 1714-65 those two cures for overcrowding enjoyed increasing favour. Under the first, any one found guilty of larceny, either "grand" or "petit," might be transported to America for seven years. The same penalty was inflicted in the next reign on poachers who were caught, with arms in their hands, in the act of chasing or

<sup>1</sup> For some good results of transportation see Lecky, vi, 253.

taking deer in unenclosed forests; or, again, it fell to be the lot of those who assaulted magistrates or officers engaged in salving wrecks, and likewise on all who were married without banns or licence. It was reserved for the law makers of George III to allot seven years of transportation to all who stole or took fish "in any water within a park, paddock, orchard or yard, and the receivers, aiders and abettors." Sir William Eden, in his "Discourse on Banishment," cites these offences as about the average of the crimes punishable by transportation; but he hints that many less heinous offences led to the same dreary goal. That philanthropist apparently did not think it an ingenious means of torture to send some of these convicts to Algiers to rescue from life-long slavery the Christians caught by the Barbary rovers.

Meanwhile, the United States having closed their doors against poachers, thieves, and those who married in too great haste, a paternal Government found it necessary either to relax the penal code, to build more prisons, to commission more hulks, or to found new penal settlements. Georgian legislators, being practical men, turned their thoughts to the last alternative. The subject was brought up in the House of Commons by Burke on 16th March 1785. He asserted that as many as 100,000 convicts were then liable to transportation; and protested against the rigour, cruelty, and expense attending that mode of punishment. Lord Beauchamp again called the attention of the House to that topic on 11th April, when Pitt admitted the importance of finding a new penal settlement. The Gambia River in West Africa had been used for that purpose, and Burke now rose to protest against the inhumanity of sending convicts to any part of that deadly coast. He was interrupted by the Prime Minister, who assured him that such a plan was not in contemplation, and that a Report would soon be issued.<sup>1</sup>

Parliamentary Papers on this subject appeared on 9th May and 28th July. The latter is remarkable for the statesmanlike utterance, quoted as a motto at the head of this chapter, which shows that at least some of our politicians looked on a new settlement as something more than a chapel-of-ease of our prisons. In other respects the Report is somewhat puerile. It recommended the need of strict discipline in the new settle-

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xiv, 490-2.

at, and pointed out the district of the River das Voltas as desirable. If this were the same as the River Volta of the Gold Coast, the Committee evidently regarded fever as the most active of governors.

It is curious to speculate on the results that might have ensued these weak and stumbling moves. Probably the strenuous opposition of Burke vetoed the Gambia and Gold Coast schemes; but the Government, still intent upon the Atlantic coast of Africa, sent a sloop, H.M.S. "Nautilus," to survey the north-west coast between  $15^{\circ} 50'$  and  $33^{\circ}$ . Very fortunately for the future of the British people the whole coast was found to be inhospitable. If the *hinterland* of Walvisch Bay or Angrauea had been less barren it is almost certain that the new colonial colony would have been formed at one of those spots. Ministers also turned their attention to the coasts adjacent to the Cape Town; for we find Pitt writing to Grenville on 2nd October 1785: "I have desired Devaynes also to send you some papers relative to a scheme of a settlement on the Caffre coast, to answer in some respects the purposes of the Cape, and to serve as a receptacle for convicts, which I hope you will have time to look at."<sup>1</sup>

This points to a plan for settling some point of the coast of Caffaria, possibly Algoa Bay or what is now East London. There were special reasons for gaining a foothold in that quarter, knowing that the Dutch Republic was falling more and more under the control of France, and the union of those two Powers on the East would have threatened the existence of our Indian Empire. A British stronghold on the South African coast was therefore highly desirable; but perhaps matters were too hurried in the years 1786 and 1787 for this menacing step to be taken.

Whatever may have been the cause, Pitt and his colleagues seemed to find a point on the African coast suitable for their purpose, which was to found a penal settlement furnishing relief to the prison system and to British ships midway on the voyage to India. Had they discovered such a place the course of history might have been very different. The English speaking people would early have taken so firm a hold of South Africa as to press on a solution of the Anglo-Dutch question. But in the

<sup>1</sup> "Dropmore P.," i, 257.

meantime the Pacific coast of Australia would have gone to France. The one study in which Louis XVI shone, and in which Pitt was most deficient, was geography. The lord of Versailles found his chief mental recreation in maps and books of travel. Already he had sent out expeditions to rival that of Captain Cook; and, as we shall see, only by the infinitesimal margin of six days did Britons secure a foothold in Australia in advance of their rivals.

The honour of turning the attention of Ministers to the Pacific coast of "New Holland" belongs to Sir Joseph Banks, James Matra, and Admiral Sir George Young. In his description of the voyage of Captain Cook along the coast of New South Wales, Banks had spoken of the rich soil and wealth of vegetation around Botany Bay, a description which undoubtedly led Matra and Young to take up the matter. Sir Joseph Banks did not pursue the theme. At least in his letters and papers in the British Museum there is no hint that he induced Pitt or Lord Sydney to people that terrestrial paradise. Perhaps the work of the Royal Society, of which he was President, engaged all his attention.

James Maria Matra, a Corsican who had long been in the British service and had accompanied Banks in the memorable voyage of Captain Cook,<sup>1</sup> was the first to formulate a definite scheme for the colonization of Botany Bay. In a long letter, dated 23rd August 1783, he pointed out to the Coalition Cabinet the great extent of the land, the fertility of the soil, and the paucity of the natives as marking it out for settlement, especially by the American Loyalists, whose dire distress then aroused deep sympathy. He also declared that the nearness of New South Wales to the Spice Islands, India, China, and Japan, was favourable for commerce; that the growth of New Zealand flax would provide endless supplies of cordage for shipping; and that, in case of war, the harbours of New South Wales would furnish a useful base of naval operations against the Dutch and Spanish settlements in the East. In his original scheme Matra did not mention settlement by convicts. He desired to found a colony either by means of United Empire Loyalists, or "marines accustomed to husbandry,"<sup>2</sup> a suggestion which re-

<sup>1</sup> Evon Nepean in a Report to Pitt sketched the career of Matra. He was afterwards Consul for Morocco (Pitt MSS., 163).

<sup>2</sup> "New South Wales Despatches," vol. i, pt. 6, 1-5.

s, not very felicitously, the Roman plan of planting veteran soldiers on the outposts of the realm.

The discredit of making the first suggestion in favour of a convict settlement at Botany Bay probably belongs to Lord Sydney, Secretary of State for Home Affairs in the Pitt Cabinet. Matra had a conversation with him on 6th April 1784, in which the Minister hinted at the desirability of relieving the congestion in the prisons, which was giving trouble to the authorities. The details of the conversation are not known; but apparently Matra added a postscript to his scheme, in which he referred to the interview and remarked on the frightful mortality among the convicts sent to the West Coast of Africa. Out of those sent there in 1775-6, 334 died, 271 deserted, and nothing is known of the remainder. Obviously in a distant and healthy climate like Botany Bay, men must either work or starve; certainly they could not return.<sup>1</sup> Nothing definite seems to have come of Matra's conversation with Sydney or his plan, even now modified.

Scarcely more successful were the efforts of Admiral Sir George Young to interest Ministers in the subject. His scheme was sent by the Attorney-General, Sir Richard Pepper Arden, to Sydney on 13th January 1785. The admiral called attention to the facilities which New South Wales would enjoy for mercantile trade with New Spain, China, and the East Indies. He laid stress on the fertility of the soil and the variety of products in the new possession, which would ensure the growth of all tropical and sub-tropical products. New Zealand flax would by itself furnish several requisites for ship-building and rigging, thereby freeing us from dependence on Russia. Metals would probably be found; and thus at a small expense (about £1000) an important commercial mart might be founded. Sir George Young deprecated any plan of emigration from Great Britain as weakening to her; but he suggested that the disaffected American Loyalists should be transferred to New South Wales, and that labourers might be collected from the Society Islands and China. "All the people required from England are only a few that are possessed of the useful arts, and those compassed among the crews of the ships that may be sent on that service." He, however, added that convict settlements might

<sup>1</sup> "New South Wales Despatches," 6, 7; E. Jenks, "Hist. of the Australian Colonies," 25.



most suitably be planted there. Finally, he claimed that the whole scheme would further the cause of religion and humanity, and redound to the prosperity and glory of King George III.<sup>1</sup>

The ideas and the phraseology of the Memorandum are so similar to those used by Matra as to suggest that Sir George Young founded his plan on that of the Corsican; and the Admiral at the end of his Plan introduced three sentences on the suitability of parts of New South Wales for convicts. Possibly this was inserted in order to attract Ministers. Nevertheless they took no action on the matter; and possibly, but for the pressure exerted by Lord Beauchamp and Burke on 11th April 1785, this vitally important question would have remained in abeyance. Pitt, however, then promised that Government would take it up. The "*Nautilus*" was accordingly sent to the African coast, with the result that we have seen; and the humiliating truth must be confessed that the Ministry showed no sign of interest, if we except the single sentence in Pitt's letter of 2nd October 1785, quoted above, respecting a settlement in Caffraria.

Not until 18th August 1786 do we find any sign that the Government sought to redeem its promise to Parliament. The Pitt Papers, however, afford proof that Ministers had before them at least one other scheme for the disposing of convicts elsewhere than in New Holland. On 14th September 1786 William Pulteney wrote to Pitt an important letter (quoted in part in Chapter XIV), which concluded as follows: "I mentioned to Mr. Dundas that a much better plan had been proposed to Lord Sidney [*me*] for disposing of our felons than that which I see is advertised, that of sending them to Botany Bay, but his Lordship had, too hastily I think, rejected it, if you wish to know the particulars, Mr. Dundas can in great measure explain them, and I can get the whole in writing."<sup>2</sup>

Pitt gave no encouragement to his correspondent, and the official plan, already drafted, ran its course. On 18th August 1786, Sydney sent to the Lords of the Treasury a statement that, considering the crowded state of the prisons and the impossibility of finding a suitable site for a settlement in Africa, the King had fixed on Botany Bay, owing to the accounts given by those who had sailed with Captain Cook. As many as 750

<sup>1</sup> "New South Wales Despatches," 11-13. A copy of this "Plan" is in Pitt MSS., 342.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 169.

victs would therefore be sent out, along with 180 marines, provisions for two years, seeds, tools, and other necessities for founding of a settlement. The importance of growing New Zealand flax was named, a sign that Ministers had consulted the reports of Matra and Sir George Young, and saw the need of having a naval station in the Pacific. A fortnight later Sydney wrote a similar letter to the Lords of the Admiralty.<sup>1</sup>

In this halting and prosaic way did Ministers set their hands to one of the most fruitful undertakings of all time. We do not know which member took the initiative. Probably it was Sydney, Minister for Home Affairs; but Pitt certainly gave his approval, and there are two letters which show that he took interest in the details. One is his letter to Evan Nepean, Under Secretary for Home Affairs, requesting him to obtain from the Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir Charles Middleton, an estimate of the expenses of the expedition.<sup>2</sup> The second is a letter from the Lord Chief Justice, Earl Camden, to Pitt, who must have consulted him about the legal questions involved in the formation of the colony:

Bill St., *Jan.* 29, 1787.<sup>3</sup>

DEAR PITT,

... I have looked over the draught of the Bill for establishing summary jurisdiction in Botany Bay. I believe such a jurisdiction in the present state of that embryo (for I can't call it either settlement or colony) is necessary, as the component parts of it are not the proper stuff to make juries [*sic*] in capital cases especially. However, as this is a novelty in our constitution, would it not be right to require the Court to send over to England every year a report of all the capital convictions, that we may be able to see in what manner this jurisdiction has been exercised? For I presume it is not meant to be a summary jurisdiction; for if the colony thrives and the number of inhabitants increase, one sh<sup>d</sup> wish to grant them trial by jury as soon as it can be done with propriety.

Clearly, then, Pitt had a distinct share in the drafting of the Bill for establishing the settlement. The general plan had been decided at a Council held at St. James's Palace on 6th December 1786.<sup>4</sup> The Letters Patent forming the Courts of Law were

<sup>1</sup> "New South Wales Despatches," 14-23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Pitt MSS., 119.

<sup>4</sup> "New South Wales Despatches," 1, pt. ii, 30. See later (pp. 67-70) for the details of the Act of Parliament.

issued on 2nd April 1787; but it was not until 12th May that H.M.S. "Sirius" and "Supply," escorting the transports "Alexander," "Charlotte," "Scarborough," "Prince of Wales," "Friendship," and "Lady Penrhyn," set sail from Spithead on their dreary voyage of eight months. On 20th January 1788 Governor Phillip landed at Botany Bay, and a few days later he transferred his strange company to the land-locked and beautiful Port Jackson, on an inlet of which he founded the infant settlement of Sydney. He was just in time to anticipate the French expedition under La Pérouse, which sailed into the harbour only six days after Phillip landed at Botany Bay. Thus, by extraordinary good luck, despite all the delays at Westminster, the British narrowly forestalled their rivals in the occupation of that magnificent coast. Captain Cook, it is true, had claimed it for the British Crown; but in international law effective occupation is a necessary sequel to so vague and sweeping a declaration. The choice of the name "Sydney" for the infant settlement attests the conviction of Governor Phillip that the whole plan owed very much to the initiative of that nobleman. It is, however, strange that the name of Pitt was not given to some town or river of the colony; for he certainly played an important part in the undertaking.

Nevertheless, the whole question reflects no great credit either on Pitt or Sydney. Neither of them had shown much insight or eagerness in the matter. Especially may they and their colleagues be blamed for not having resolved, though at slightly increased cost, to found the colony worthily by means of the American Loyalists who had suffered so much for their devotion to King and Fatherland.

The question of the American Loyalists will be referred to later in this chapter; and it is not here suggested that those Loyalists who had migrated to the lands soon to be known as New Brunswick and Ontario should have been sent to the Southern Seas. There were many others, who had set sail with the British garrisons leaving New York and other towns, now available for that experiment. They were living in England in penury and with hope deferred, while the question of the indemnity in honour due to them from the United States slowly petered out. The British Parliament was investigating their claims and finally acknowledged its obligations to them; but in the meantime they were in want. Would not the Ministry have

sulted their interests and the welfare of the Empire by offering to them to commute their pecuniary claims for grants of land and expenses of settlement in New South Wales? The only objection, that their claims had not been entirely investigated by the year 1787, is trifling. The offer might surely have been made to those whose cases and characters were well known, and who were suited to a life of hardship and adventure. There must have been very many who would have preferred a hard and active life to one of wretchedness in London; and when we reflect on the great accession of strength brought by the Loyalists to Canada and New Brunswick, it will ever remain a matter of regret that Ministers acted on the motive which appeared so forcibly to Lord Sydney, that of easing the pressure on the prisoners.

At the time, it is true, their experiment was highly economical: the cost of the expedition and settlement at Sydney from October 1786 to October 1789 being only £8,632, or one-twentieth part of the sum which in the year 1787 Parliament unanimously voted for the discharge of the debts of a spendthrift king.<sup>1</sup> It is scarcely fair to read the ideas of our age into one to which we have moved very far away, or to censure Pitt for his complaisance to the future George IV, while he spared the expenses of the greatest colonial experiment of his generation. No one could foresee the splendid future of the "New South Wales of the Southern Continent." Even Matra and Sir George Young, who went far ahead, believed that the work of the settlement must be done mainly by Chinese and South Sea Islanders.

Nevertheless, seeing that the advantage of utilizing the energies of the American Loyalists was clearly laid before Ministers, it is surprising that they paid no heed to a plan which might ultimately have proved to be more economical even than the export of convicts. Certainly it would have furnished the new land with the best of colonists. The kith and kin of the men who built up New Brunswick would have laid broad and deep foundations of New South Wales. The greatest good fortune of North America was the advent of Puritan leaders as founders of a new State; and the transfer to the Southern Continent of their descendants, who rivalled them in the staunchness of their fidelity to principle, would have been an Imperial asset of priceless

<sup>1</sup> J. Bonwick, "The First Twenty Years of Australia," 6.

worth. There are times when the foresight and imagination of a statesman mean infinitely much to the future of the race; and no action is more fruitful in results than the settlement of a new Continent. The Greeks did well to solemnize the sending forth of colonists by the honours of the State and the sanction of religion. And what they did for the founding of one more Greek city, Great Britain ought to have done for the occupation of a coast-line known to possess vast possibilities of growth.

The painful truth must be faced that in this matter Pitt lacked the *Imperial Imagination*. Despite vague assertions to the contrary by professed panegyrists, I cannot find a word in his speeches or letters which evinced any interest in the Botany Bay experiment. Thus, in the debate of 6th February 1791, on the condition of the young settlements and the question of stopping the transportation of 1,850 more convicts, Pitt spoke of that experiment as if it were an improved and economical prison. His speech did not rise to the level of that of Sir Charles Bunbury and Mr. Jekyll, the mover and seconder of the motion for an inquiry into the whole subject of transportation. They both pleaded for more rational methods of punishment, wherein the depraved would cease to contaminate the less guilty. Bunbury commented on the alarming increase of crime of late years, the number of sentences of death having been doubled, while convictions for felony had quadrupled. Both he and Jekyll pressed for the construction of penitentiaries where the system of "that good and useful citizen, Mr. Howard," might be better enforced; and they mentioned the report that the settlements in New South Wales were ill-suited to this purpose, owing to the sterility of the soil.

To this last charge Pitt made no effective answer. So far as we can judge from the semi-official reports, he sought refuge in the miserable reply that "in point of expense no cheaper mode of disposing of the convicts could be found," and that, as the chief cost of starting that settlement had been already incurred—how paltry the cost we have seen—it would be foolish to seek for some other place where those expenses must again be met! He expressed his approval of penitentiaries, said nothing about that fruitful mother of crime, the penal code, and declined to take any steps for stopping the transport of the 1,850 convicts. It was something that, amidst these frigid negations, he did not oppose the motion for an inquiry into the condition of Botany

Bay. Curiously enough, he did not once name the only considerable settlement, Sydney,<sup>1</sup> so limited was his outlook on social and colonial problems. Wide as were his views on most questions, it must be admitted that here was his blind side; and he must be held partly responsible for spreading over new lands a social taint which long blighted their progress.

That taint was to vanish; and its disappearance in a few generations is a signal proof that, under fit conditions, the human race does not degenerate but wins its way to higher levels. Nevertheless, in view of the power of historic ideas and traditions, we must ever regret that Pitt and his colleagues did not resolve to make the new settlement a living proof of Britain's care for the staunchest and truest of her children.

By a transition which, however abrupt in a geographical sense, is slight in the sphere of politics, we pass from the settlement of New South Wales to the adjustment of affairs in Canada. Both questions resulted from the American War. The refugees from the old American colonies, who now huddled with their families in the purlieus of Soho, formed the tough nucleus of what had been a very large and influential band of men in the States. Writers of the school of Bancroft used to treat the Loyalists as traitors who richly deserved the hanging or shooting in cold blood which not seldom befell them at the hands of righteous patriots. Those, however, who regard history, not as a means of enforcing certain opinions, but of reflecting the life of the time, are generally agreed that the Loyalists acted from sincere conviction, which led them deliberately to face cruel and prolonged persecution. At the outset of the war they numbered about one third of the population of the States; and, at least 20,000 of them joined the British forces.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the war about 60,000 Loyalists were compelled to leave the States, of whom nearly one half settled in the future province of New Brunswick; some 10,000 went to found the British population in Upper Canada (Ontario); but many sailed with the retiring garrisons to Great Britain.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxviii, 1221-5. For an account of the new settlement see "The History of New Holland, 1616-1787."

<sup>2</sup> Sabine, "The American Loyalists," §1 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Sir C. P. Lucas, "Hist. Geography of the Brit. Colonies," v (Canada),

It is with these last that we are here at first concerned. Their number was given as 428 in the official inquiry of 1782-3,<sup>1</sup> but that list was probably incomplete. Their condition soon became pitiable. By the Treaty of Versailles (September 1783) the American Congress pledged itself to recommend the States of the Union to restore the property confiscated from the Loyalists. The States ignored the recommendation. Pitt has sometimes been blamed for not doing more to press the fulfilment of this treaty obligation, which was carried out only by South Carolina. But he seems to have taken the only means possible, namely, of refusing to surrender certain of the western forts of the States, until satisfaction was accorded on this head.<sup>2</sup> John Adams, who arrived in London as ambassador from the United States in 1786, received that answer to his protest, a fact which suffices to disprove the statement that the clause of the treaty relating to the Loyalists was inserted merely for effect.<sup>3</sup>

Pitt further sought to carry out the stipulations for the collection of debts due to the Loyalists before the beginning of the war. He sent out a Mr. Anstey to deal with these thorny and almost hopeless claims. The matter dragged on; and a letter forwarded to the Prime Minister on 30th January 1787 refers to the inquiry as still incomplete.<sup>4</sup> In 1785 Pitt offered to grant due compensation to the American Loyalists; but long and most discreditable delays ensued. Several petitions forwarded to Pitt show that payments were either inadequate or were often deferred, and that the petitioners were in much distress.<sup>5</sup> The letter above referred to states that from £60,000 to £80,000 a year had been granted in pensions; but that in 1787, owing to deaths and other causes, the amount fell to £50,000. Even this

<sup>1</sup> Kingsford, "Hist. of Canada," vii, 216.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot agree with Professor E. Channing ("The United States, 1765-1865," 118) that the action of the States towards the Loyalists "was not an infraction of the treaty." The terms bound the United States to do their utmost to induce the component States to compensate the Loyalists. But they took only the slightest and most perfunctory steps in that direction. Pitt, as we saw in Chapter VI, distinctly enjoined it as a debt of honour on the United States, and cannot surely be held responsible for its evasion.

<sup>3</sup> Kingsford, "Hist. of Canada," vii, 215; Sir C. P. Lucas, "Hist. of Canada, 1763-1812," 214.

<sup>4</sup> Pitt MSS., 344.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* The cases of Samuel Gale, Sir John Johnson, F. J. D. Smyth, and R. F. Pitt seem especially hard.

exceeds the average of the official amount by some £7,000.<sup>1</sup> The writer goes on to assert that the utmost possible had been done to relieve the distress, and shows the unreasonableness of the claim of some Loyalists for compensation for the loss of their professions. Finally the whole matter was cleared up by the proposal of Pitt to the House of Commons on 6th June 1788 to vote the sum of £1,228,239 to the Loyalists in proportion to the merits of their cases, and £113,952 to the claimants from West Florida. To this the House agreed, Burke commending the proposal as "a new, and noble instance of national bounty and generosity."<sup>2</sup>

Pitt evidently considered the question as settled by the distribution of this sum and of certain grants of land in Canada; for in the year 1792, when other claims were forwarded to him through the medium of Sir Henry Clinton, he replied as follows in a letter of 29th May 1792:

On the fullest consideration of the subject, I have not thought myself justified in proposing to open the Commission again for inquiry into those cases which were not brought forward within any of the periods before limited; and under these circumstances it seems impossible to give any compensation for particular losses. The plan has therefore been adopted of giving some provision by grants of land in Canada, to such persons of this description as may be willing to accept it; and of advancing them certain sums of money (according to the classes in which they have been distributed) for the purpose of assisting them in removing and in settling themselves. With respect to the three persons whom you particularly mention of the name of Plater, Harding and Williams, the granting to them the sums recommended by Col. Delancy was delayed from its appearing that they had formerly had an advance for the purpose of enabling them to go to America; but notwithstanding this circumstance it has been determined from the nature of their cases

<sup>1</sup> See J. E. Wilmott, "Hist. View of the Commission . . . of the American Loyalists" (London, 1815).

<sup>2</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxvii, 610-19. The total expenses incurred on behalf of the American Loyalists as shown in the Budgets of the years 1784 to 1789 are as follows: £82,750; £190,019; £315,873; £132,856; £82,346; £362,922; or a total of £1,084,016. These sums are distinct from the special votes of £1,228,239 and £113,952 above referred to; which raise the total for those six years to £2,426,207. I take these figures from the Budgets as given in the Annual Registers. It is impossible to harmonize them with Wilmott's figures. He gives £3,112,455 as the total up to and including the year 1790.



and your strong testimony in their favour, to comply with this recommendation, which will be immediately carried into effect.<sup>1</sup>

The settlement of the Loyalists in Canada and Nova Scotia produced far-reaching results. About 28,000 settled in Nova Scotia, the larger portion of them selecting the banks of the River St. John. Besides being far removed from Halifax, the seat of government, they found themselves absolutely without influence in the administration, as the Governor refused to enlarge the Legislative Council by admitting one of their number. They therefore petitioned the Home Government for separation from Nova Scotia—a request which was at once granted (1784). Pitt thus showed his complete confidence in the Loyalists and in the policy of according full liberty in local affairs to a community which obviously needed such a boon.

Not very dissimilar were the results of the influx of the Loyalists into Canada Proper. About 10,000 of them crossed Lake Ontario or the Niagara River, and formed a thin fringe of settlements along the Upper St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie. In 1784 Governor Haldimand granted to them large tracts of land, generally in proportion to the services rendered during the war.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, the settlement was of a semi-military character; and everywhere the colonists took a pride in adding to their names "U.E.," to denote the United Empire for which they had fought and suffered. The lot of many of them was hard in the extreme; but it seems that even those who had been reared in luxury preferred the rigours of the Canadian winter in a log-hut to the persecutions which would have been their lot in the United States.

A settlement of a very different kind was that of de Puisaye and some fifty French royalists in the autumn of 1798. Puisaye was a man of fine physique and perseverance, as appeared

<sup>1</sup> Pitt MSS., 102. Colonel Delancey named by Pitt was probably Lieutenant-Colonel Stephen Delancey (1740-98), who helped to raise a loyal battalion at New York and finally became Governor of Tobago. His son, Sir William Delancey, was Wellington's Quarter-Master-General at Waterloo, where he was killed.

<sup>2</sup> Greswell ("Hist. of the Dominion of Canada," 144) states that £4,000,000 was then allotted to the settlers in Upper Canada. I can nowhere find any confirmation of this. Kingsford, "Hist. of Canada," mentions only grants of land and small sums of money; but states (vii, 217) that in all the sum of £3,886,087 was granted to the Loyalists in Great Britain.

men work, and proposed with other adventurous spirits to settle in Canada. The Duke of Portland and Windham favoured the scheme; and a district named Windham was allotted to them between York (Toronto) and Lake Simcoe. But the ill-fortune of the French noblesse dogged them in the New World. They arrived too late. Probably they knew nothing of the work required of them. Even more probably they quarrelled, intrigued, and formed factions. Painsy left the place and settled a time near the Niagara River, until at the Peace of Amiens he went back to England. The Windham settlement went to naught, thus once more revealing the incompetence of that product of the *ancien régime*, the French *seigneur*.<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of the United Empire Loyalists altered the political situation in Canada in two ways: it provided for the first time a relatively large body of English-speaking settlers, and it brought to the front the question of representative institutions. Hitherto the French *habitants*, scattered sparsely along the Lower St. Lawrence and the Richelieu Rivers, had shown little or no desire in that direction; but questions arising out of the war caused some stir in those primitive communities. A feeling of much unrest followed. The British merchants and soldiers at Quebec and Montreal also had their grievances against the Government and the French majority; so that in 1784 a Committee comprising men of those towns petitioned the Governor for an elective House of Assembly.

In order to understand the meaning of this request, we must remember that election had no place in the Canadian Government. By the Quebec Act of 1774, which regulated public affairs for the colony, the administration of affairs rested with a Governor representing the King, an Executive Council consisting of members selected by him, and a Legislative Council chosen on the same basis. The framers of that measure had also frankly recognized the fact that the population of the colony was overwhelmingly French. They therefore provided for the continuance of French law and French customs, both religious and

<sup>1</sup> Sir C. P. Lucas, "Hist. of Canada" (1763-1812), 230-2.

agrarian—a well-meant measure which, while ensuring the loyalty of the Canadians during the American War of Independence, aroused the anger of British settlers and merchants. The United Empire Loyalists in Upper Canada found these French customs insufferable. They had not left the United States in order to merge themselves in a community modelled on the France of Louis XIV.

Moreover, in other respects, the Quebec Act failed to meet the needs of the colonists; so that Fox described Canada as having no settled government.<sup>1</sup> Here he erred. The bane of that land was too much government. The settlers were beset by too many decrees, several of which were inapplicable to the needs of the growing mercantile communities at Quebec and Montreal, who found themselves hampered by the French laws and were in constant friction with the “ancient” colonists. They therefore sent the petition of 1784, requesting the bestowal of representative institutions and of British law, both mercantile and criminal; but they admitted the need of retaining French laws for agriculture, property, religion, and social life. Such an admission was repugnant to settlers in the upper districts, who in 1785 petitioned for entire exemption from French laws and customs.<sup>2</sup>

As was but natural, Pitt and his colleagues seem to have been perplexed by the difficulty of this problem, which certainly was one of infinite complexity. It soon appeared, as the outcome of official inquiries, that, taking Canada as a whole, there was only one English-speaking colonist to fifteen French. The small British population was centred almost entirely in Quebec and Montreal (even there it was only a third of the population), or else straggled along the Upper St. Lawrence into the almost unknown wilds between Lakes Ontario and Huron. How was it possible, at the bidding of so insignificant a minority, to repeal the French laws and enrage the majority? Would not France and the States be certain to intervene and thus fill to the full the cup of disaster?

For the present the Pitt Cabinet limited its efforts to the strengthening of the executive powers at Quebec by enlarging the powers of the new Governor-General, Lord Dorchester (1786) so that they extended over the upper districts, and also over

<sup>1</sup> “Parl. Hist.,” xxviii, 505 (debate of 8th March 1790).

<sup>2</sup> Kingsford, *op. cit.*, vii, 234-236.

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Meanwhile Pitt and Sydney awaited the results of the inquiries set on foot in Canada; and, though the resulting delay was irritating at the time, it proved to be beneficial; for before the Ministry at home could frame its Bill, the outbreak of the French Revolution had minimized the danger of intervention from France.

Mishaps to the despatches, the substitution of Grenville for Sydney as Home Secretary, in June 1789, and the General Election of 1790, further retarded legislation on this subject. Twice in the year 1790 Grenville had to apologize to the House for delays due to the terrible weather of the winter of 1789-90.<sup>1</sup> On the latter occasion he described his endeavours to get at the truth of the situation in Canada, his conferences with his colleagues, and his assiduity in drafting the Bill which he promised to place before them as soon as he received *Dorchester's* replies to certain questions. This declaration is interesting as showing that the famous Act of 1791 was really drafted by Grenville, and that he considered it his own. In view, however, of his very recent appointment to the Home Office, and of his intimate relations to Pitt, we may be sure that the spirit informing the measure was that of the Prime Minister. We now know, however, that Grenville was responsible for the proposal to confer hereditary titles on the members of the Governor's Legislative Council;<sup>2</sup> and it is significant that, while Pitt acquiesced in it, no such creation of a colonial nobility ever took place.

Grenville having been raised to the peerage in November 1790, Pitt moved for leave to bring in the Canada Bill to the Lower House (4th March 1791). In an explanatory speech, he stated the aim of the measure to be "to promote the happiness and internal policy [progress?] of the province and to put an end to the differences of opinion and growing competition that had for some years existed in Canada between the ancient inhabitants and the new settlers from England and America [*sic*] on several important points, and to bring the government of the province, as near as the nature and situation of it would admit, to the British Constitution." He therefore proposed to divide Canada into an Upper and a Lower Province, "the former for the English and American settlers, the lower for the Canadians."

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxviii, 503, 627.

<sup>2</sup> "Dropmore P.," i, 507 (Grenville to Thurlow, 12th September 1789).

The inconveniences that might result to the minority in the latter province would, he hoped, be averted by the election of a House of Assembly, which would propose measures, acting therein conjointly with a Legislative Council, of members nominated for life. As it has been stated that Pitt avowed his intention to create two provinces whose mutual jealousies would prevent rebellion, it is desirable to notice that in this first speech he insisted that separation would be the only means of ending the existing strifes and of according to each of them the blessings of the English Constitution.<sup>1</sup> We may also remark that Pitt seems to have paid no heed to the suggestion that the Lower Province might be governed autocratically, while Upper Canada had representative institutions. This would become impossible when the French *habitants* gained political consciousness; and Pitt was surely right in rejecting that makeshift.

His policy was, however, to be sharply criticized, especially by the British minority in Lower Canada. In a petition dated London, 15th March 1791 (which is printed in full in "Pitt and Napoleon Miscellanea"), seven firms engaged in the Canada trade pointed out the defects of the measure; and it is highly significant that some of their objections foreshadowed those which were to be so ably set forth in Lord Durham's Report on Canada (1839). The petition was drafted by Lynburner, a Quebec merchant who had drawn up that of 1784. The Memorialists declared that the Bill before Parliament would perpetuate many of the worst evils of the Quebec Act, which sprang from the attempt to impose one code of laws on two peoples differing widely in their manner of life, customs, and needs. They asserted that the only means of soothing the strifes was to apply English law to the English population and French law to the French; that any division of the colony would be artificial and would debar Upper Canada from maritime trade. The petition concluded with the statesmanlike suggestion that the only cure for the ills of Canada was to merge her two peoples in a self-governing community.

Already Dorchester had offered objections to the proposed division of Canada; but Grenville in his despatch of 20th October 1789 set aside his arguments on the ground that, while weighty as against the present non-representative system, they did not apply to that which was about to be proposed.

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxviii, 1377-79.

... wrote) the resolution was taken of establishing a Provincial ... to be chosen in part by the people, every consideration seemed to render it desirable that the great preponderance possessed by the Upper Districts by the King's antient subjects, and in the French Canadians, should have this effect and operation on the Legislatures, rather than that these two bodies of people should meet together in the first formation of the new Constitution, and that a sufficient time has been allowed for the removal of antient prejudices, the habit of obedience to the same Government and by the common interest.'

... words imply not so much distrust of the colonists as a need of proceeding tentatively with what was a new venture. It is clear that Ministers looked on the proposed arrangements as more or less provisional, and in the last years seem to catch a glimpse of a more peaceful future. Union would be the natural step. For the present, Grenville continued, it would be well to strengthen the Governor's Council by according to its members some title of nobility (a baronetage was first hinted at) which would attach to the new institutions. Another desirable step was the sale of Crown Lands in the new districts, in order to provide the Government with a fixed and improving revenue. Fox even suggested that, had this been done in the original colonies, a cause of friction and revolt would have been

... ers must have had a deep sense of the advantages of the proposal when they disregarded the advice of the Governor-General and the firm opposition of the British settlers in Lower Canada and of their connections in London. The measure was carried, despite a long speech against it by Lyndburner at the House, in which he asserted that the division of the provinces, when once accomplished, could never be reversed. The assertion was falsified by facts in 1841. The debates on the subject were rendered memorable by an incident which will be mentioned later (Chapter XXIV). Burke had persisted in dragging the French Revolution into the discussion, and, when rebuffed by Fox, passionately declared that the friendship between them was at an end. As for the question before the House, Fox opposed, while Burke defended, the proposed divi-

... report on Canadian Archives," by D. Brymer (Ottawa, 1891).

sion of Canada. The Whig leader further objected to the proposal to make a legislative councillorship an hereditary honour; and he urged Ministers to increase the size of the Houses of Assembly. Pitt carried his proposal that they should number sixteen for the Upper Province and fifty for the Lower. Finally the House agreed to leave open the question of the hereditary tenure of councillorships; and it is noteworthy that no hereditary title was conferred. The Bill became law on 14th May 1791.

To discuss the suitability of this measure to Canada would involve a recital of events in that colony down to the time of Lord Durham's famous Report of 1839. All that concerns us here is the question of Pitt's attitude towards those complex problems. His conduct cannot be pronounced hasty or doctrinaire. Not until official evidence and advice were forthcoming did he and his colleagues sketch the first outlines of the scheme. But when he had made up his mind, he held on his way with resolute purpose. This will appear if we remember that three Ministers were successively responsible for the Bill. Sydney drafted it. Grenville revised the evidence and recast the Bill;<sup>1</sup> but it fell to Henry Dundas to amend it and carry it into execution. As the Bill was but little changed, we may infer that one mind was at all times paramount.

Canadian historians have generally allowed that the motives of Pitt were enlightened; and, the assertion sometimes made, that they were based on a resolve to make use of the hostility of French and British settlers so as to prevent revolt, is contradicted by all that is known of his manly and hopeful nature. His speeches ring with a feeling of confidence in the heading effect of representative institutions; and it should be remembered that, if in 1837 they were found inadequate to the needs of the progressive Upper Province, they yet nursed that little community into youth. 'This is all that can be expected from a measure which was necessarily tentative.' The chief objections against his division of the provinces were that it tended to weaken the British community in the Lower Province, while it also cut off the Upper Province from the sea and placed it at the mercy of the Customs' laws framed at Quebec.

To this it may be replied that, even if the infant settlements of the Upper St. Lawrence had remained bound up with the

<sup>1</sup> "Drapmore P.," I, 496, 497.

<sup>2</sup> See some good remarks on this by Sir C. P. Lucas, *op. cit.*, 363-70.

districts, the English-speaking population would still be in a decided minority, and that it was better to allow United Empire Loyalists to carve out their own destiny, as were doing in New Brunswick, in the hope that time would bring about an equipoise between the two peoples. The erection of a Customs' barrier was truly a serious matter; but it was dictated by geographical and racial conditions which were insurmountable, save by the Act of Union, which, under happier circumstances, came exactly half a century later. In the period 1791-1841 Upper Canada grew from a population of about 10,000 to 100,000; and in that fact may be found the best justification for the Canadian policy. When looked at from the point of view of the future, it seems to deserve higher praise than has generally been accorded to it.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE SLAVE TRADE

Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs  
Receive our air, that moment they are free;  
They touch our country, and their shackles fall;  
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
And let it circulate through every vein  
Of all your Empire—that where Britain's power  
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

CHURCH.

**G**REAT movements are too often connected with the names of one or two prominent men, to the neglect of others whose services are highly meritorious. Laziness rather than unfairness may be assigned as the cause of this mistake. The popular consciousness, unable to hold together names, according to gradation of merit, settles on one or two as convenient pegs for the memory, and discards the remainder. Hence it comes about that commanders acquire undying fame which may be due to their chiefs of staff; and statesmen are reputed the authors of measures which they accepted doubtfully from their permanent officials.

It is by some such process of hasty labelling that the name of Wilberforce is often affixed alone to the movement for the liberation of the slaves. True, he deserves to hold a very high place in the roll-call of the champions of philanthropy. But the following short summary will suffice to suggest that many other names, now wellnigh forgotten, deserve to be held in equal honour. Of those who helped to arouse public opinion on this question George Fox and William Edmundson come first in point of time. They lifted up their voice in and after the year 1671 against the cruelties inflicted on negro slaves in Barbadoes and elsewhere; but we do not find that their views on slavery

affected a large number of their co-religionists until the year 1727, when the Society of Friends in their annual meeting at London passed a resolution condemning both the slave trade and the owning of slaves.<sup>1</sup> This conviction spread to the Quakers of Pennsylvania (the "Quaker State") where worthy members of the Society succeeded in arousing public opinion even against the institution of slavery.

Reverting to England, with which alone we are concerned, we find the Quakers striving to stop the worst abuses of the Slave Trade. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) had handed over to England a great part of that traffic; and Chatham himself boasted that his conquests in Africa during the Seven Years' War had placed almost the whole of it in British hands. When a man of his elevation of thought held this language, we can imagine that the many looked on the trade as a pillar of the Empire, and derided its few opponents as lunatics.

Not that public opinion was wholly blind to its evils. In the year 1750 Parliament had passed an Act forbidding the kidnapping of negroes; but it proved wholly ineffective; and, as the horrors connected with the Slave Trade became better known, the Society of Friends warned all its members to abstain from any connection whatever with so unholy a traffic (1758). Three years later it resolved to disown any who should disregard this warning.<sup>2</sup> Thus, to the religious zeal and consistency of the Friends we are indebted for the first attempts to abolish this traffic. No small community has ever rendered a greater service to the cause of religion and humanity.

It should be noted in passing that their action and that of later abolitionists helped to link together these two ideals in a manner which was to be infinitely fruitful. In this connection Granville Sharp, John Wesley, Clarkson, Paley, Wilberforce, Buxton, Zachary Macaulay, and many others may be named as proving the close union that subsisted between religious conviction and the philanthropic movement. The power of religion to impel to good works shone forth in all of them. Wilberforce gave scarcely a thought to the slaves until the work of grace began in his own heart. In 1774 Wesley published his work,

<sup>1</sup> Clarkson, "Hist. of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," i, 110-113. See p. 259 for a chart showing the names of those who had protested against the Trade from the times of Charles V, Ximenes, and G. Fox.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 114, 115.

"Thoughts upon Slavery," which greatly furthered the cause. Indeed, it should be noticed as one of the influences marking off the philanthropic movement in England from that of France that here for the most part it was an offshoot of the Evangelical Revival, whereas in France the efforts of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists imparted to similar efforts a strongly anti-Catholic bias. These facts were destined to mould the future of religion and politics in the two lands. Here philanthropists and statesmen were the mainstay of religion. There the slow cessation of persecution and the reluctant abandonment of privileges by the Roman Church ranged social reformers against her, with results that were to appear in the Revolution.

Fortunately, in England law reinforced the efforts of philanthropists. In 1772, Chief Justice Mansfield gave a decision that a slave who landed on English soil became a free man. The case arose out of the conduct of a West India merchant settled in London, who by sheer brutality had rendered a slave useless for work, had turned him adrift, but again chained him when healed by a kind-hearted physician. Granville Sharp thenceforth made it the business of his life to see justice done to the negro race, and was chiefly instrumental in bringing the whole question to a practical issue by founding in 1787 the first Abolitionist Society.

Before adverting to its labours, with which Pitt so deeply sympathized, we may notice a few facts connected with the traffic in human flesh. The evidence of Robert Norris, of Liverpool, before a Parliamentary Commission in the year 1775 showed that of the 74,000 negroes believed to be taken annually from Africa to the New World, British ships carried about 38,000; French, 20,000; Portuguese, 10,000; Dutch, 4,000; Danish, 2,000. The greater part came from Bonny, New Calabar, the Gold Coast, and Loango. Gambia is credited with exporting only 700, a suspiciously low estimate. The same witness asserted that only one slave in twenty-seven died on the voyage, while one seaman in sixteen succumbed.<sup>1</sup> Estimates, however, varied very greatly. Macpherson gave 97,000 as the number of slaves imported into the New World from Africa in the year 1768.<sup>2</sup> Efforts were made by merchants to depict the passage on the ocean as pleasant, amusements being provided on the way.

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Add. MSS., 18172 (on the Slave Trade).

<sup>2</sup> Macpherson, "Annals of Commerce," vi, 484.

It soon transpired that the chief amusement was compulsory dancing, while the "dancing" proved to be jumping in chains at the sound of the lash. It was also known that very many negroes soon after landing during the process known as seasoning died of the climate and work; that the whip was freely used in the plantations; and that the mortality among the slaves was exceedingly heavy. In this connection the name of Burke deserves to be held in honour; for he proposed that the Attorney-General should be empowered to act as Protector of the negroes.

Thus, even before the Abolitionist Society began its labours, public opinion was beginning to brand the traffic with infamy. The year 1783 saw efforts made in Parliament to repress some of the worst abuses; and the Society of Friends then sent up the petition for the total abrogation of the traffic in British slaves.<sup>1</sup> The year 1785 witnessed the publication of Clarkson's first essay on the subject; and a twelvemonth later it came out in English. In 1783 also the efforts of the Rev. James Ramsay, formerly of Teston, Kent, who had seen the evils of slavery during his residence at St. Kitt's, brought the subject home to the mind of a neighbouring lady, Lady Middleton; and she in her turn impressed a Christian duty on Wilberforce to bring forward a motion in Parliament. As this appeal harmonized with the strong religious convictions now swaying the nature of the young member for Yorkshire, he felt strongly moved to take up the cause of the negroes. In the year 1786 he made many inquiries among African West India merchants, and found much error in their information. After probing the matter, he resolved to consult Pitt as to making this question the chief object of his life.

The conversation took place under an old oak-tree in Pitt's grounds at Holwood, above the steep descent into Keston vale. The opinions of the two friends, as we have seen, had somewhat differed. Pitt did not sympathize with the pietism which now dominated the life of Wilberforce; but his religion was of a more practical type, and he may have welcomed the growth of conviction of a more practical kind, which would wear his friend from excessive introspection. Certain it is that he urged him to take the cause of the slaves as one well suited to his character and talents. Wilberforce therefore resolved to give notice of his in-

<sup>1</sup> "Parl. Hist.," xxiii, 1026.

tention to bring the subject before Parliament. Would that we knew the details of that conversation illustrative of the character of two of the most interesting men of the age. Even so, the resolve there formed renders illustrious the tree under which it was formed, fitly called "Wilberforce's oak."<sup>1</sup>

The three strands of effort which we have traced from their feeble beginnings, viz., those originating with the Quakers, Granville Sharp, and Ramsay, were now to combine. In 1787, as we have seen, Granville Sharp, in connection with London Friends, formed a "Committee for procuring Evidence on the Slave Trade," which was to become the famous Abolitionist Society. At the first meeting on 22nd May 1787, only ten were present. Their names deserve to be recorded. Granville Sharp (Chairman), J. Barton, Thomas Clarkson, W. Dillwyn, S. Hoare (junr.), J. Hooper, J. Lloyd, R. Phillips, P. Sanson, J. Woods. All but two were Quakers, and the minutes and letters abound in "thous" and "thees." One of the aims of the Committee was to distribute Clarkson's and other pamphlets on the subject. In October 1787 the Committee received a letter from Brissot and Clavière, the future leaders of the French Girondins, expressing the wish to promote their views in France, where, as is well known, the abolitionists achieved a speedy but illusory triumph in 1790.

As there has been some controversy respecting the initiation of this movement, it is well to note that not until 20th October 1787 did the Committee receive a letter from Wilberforce. He then asked for information as speedily as possible. The Minutes of the Committee show that he was not a member until the year 1794, and it is an exaggeration to say that "he directed their endeavours."<sup>2</sup> Their aim was to stir up the great towns to petition to Parliament. In this they achieved a marked success. Indeed, it was rather the formation of a strong public opinion by the labours of the Committee, than the many motions in Parliament, which at last brought triumph to the cause. Manchester and Birmingham soon displayed great interest in the subject. A kindred society was formed at the latter town. That at London grew in importance, and funds came in rapidly.

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Wilberforce," i, 151, for a photograph of the tree see "Private Papers of W. Wilberforce," 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of Wilberforce," i, 152. The Minute Books of this Committee are in the B.M. Add. MSS., 21254, 21255.



*William Shakespeare*  
*from an engraving by the 'T. Courtenay'*



Wilberforce wrote to Eden on 18th January 1788: "The fire is kindled in various parts of the Kingdom and the flame spreads wider and wider."<sup>1</sup> One of the petitions resulting from the labours of the parent committee deserves mention here. It came from 769 freemen cutlers of Sheffield, was dated 24th April 1789, and stated that, though the exports of petitioners to the African coast might fall off if the Slave Trade were abolished, yet they were so convinced of its inhumanity that they begged Parliament to sweep it away.<sup>2</sup>

Petitions of the same tenour had long been coming in, and Pitt therefore instituted an inquiry by the Privy Council respecting the whole question, including the condition of the slaves in the colonies.<sup>3</sup> One of the replies, that from Bermuda, of 10th June 1788, is typically optimistic. Governor Browne affirmed that the slaves in those islands were exceedingly well treated. Out of 4,000 slaves not more than five a year deserted. During the late war many had served on privateers and, when captured and taken to the United States, nearly all managed to make their way back to their masters. This report is a specimen of the arguments which compelled Ministers to some measure of caution.<sup>4</sup>

There is, however, abundant proof that Pitt, though a recent recruit to the movement, espoused it with enthusiasm. During the difficult negotiations with France in the autumn of 1787, we find Wilberforce informing Eden, our envoy at Paris, of Pitt's interest in the endeavour to stop the Slave Trade, a matter which would be greatly facilitated if France would agree to take the same step.<sup>5</sup> On 2nd November Pitt followed up his friend's letter by another appeal to Eden to induce the French Government "to discontinue the villainous traffic now carried on in Africa."<sup>6</sup> The following letter, hitherto unpublished, from Pitt to Eden, further shows his hope that Eden, who was soon to take the embassy at Madrid, would be able to influence that Court also:

Downing Street, Dec. 7, 1787.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Wilberforce has communicated to me your last letter respecting the African business. The more I reflect upon it, the more anxious and

<sup>1</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 307.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt MSS., 310.

<sup>3</sup> "Life of Wilberforce," i, 166.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 240.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 367.

<sup>7</sup> Pitt MSS., 102. For Eden's reply, see "Auckland Journals," i, 285.



impatient I am that the business should be brought as speedily as possible to a point; that, if the real difficulties of it can be overcome, it may not suffer from the prejudices and interested objections which will multiply during the discussion. Of course it cannot yet be ripe for any official communication; and when you transmit the memorandum, which I see you were to draw up, I hope it will be quite secret for the present. *If you see any chance of success in France, I hope you will lay your ground as soon as possible with a view to Spain also.* I am considering what to do in Holland, but the course of business there makes the secrecy, which is necessary at least for a time, more difficult.

The reply of the French Government in January 1788 was discouraging. Montmorin and his colleagues avowed their sympathy with the cause, but, fearing that it would not succeed in England, refused to commit themselves.<sup>1</sup> The advent of Neckar to power in August aroused Pitt's hopes;<sup>2</sup> but he too temporized, thereby prejudicing the success of the cause in these islands. Spain refused to stir in the matter.

Meanwhile Wilberforce had given notice of a motion on the subject, but a severe illness in February and March 1788 left him in a state of weakness which precluded the least effort. Before leaving for Bath, he begged Pitt to bring forward the motion for him. The Prime Minister consented, says Wilberforce, "with a warmth of principle and friendship that have made me love him better than I ever did before."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless he acted with caution. Up to the beginning of the year 1788, at least, he had not brought the matter before the Cabinet, probably because he knew that most of its members would oppose him. In the country also a formidable opposition was arising, and, as usually happens in such cases, enthusiasts clamoured at delay as treason to the cause.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it was this which led him to request a conference with Sharp. It took place on 21st April, and is thus reported in the Minutes of the Committee:

He [Granville Sharp] had a full opportunity of explaining that the desire of the Committee went to a full abolition of the Slave Trade. Mr. Pitt assured him that his heart was with us, and that he considered himself pledged to Mr. Wilberforce that the cause should not sustain any injury from his indisposition, but at the same time that the subject

<sup>1</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 402.

<sup>2</sup> "Drogheda P.," i, 151.

<sup>3</sup> "Auckland Journals," i, 404. "Life of Wilberforce," i, 130. See Pitt's letter of consent of 8th April 1788, in "Private Papers of W. Wilberforce," 17-19.

as of great political importance, and it was requisite to proceed in the business with temper and prudence. He did not apprehend, as the examination before the Privy Council would yet take up some time, that the subject could be fully investigated in the present session of Parliament, but said he would consider whether the forms of the House would admit of any measures that would be obligatory on them to take it up early in the ensuing session.<sup>1</sup>

On 9th May Pitt brought his motion before the House, but pending the conclusion of the official inquiry, he offered no opinion on the subject, for which he was sharply twitted by Fox and Burke. His conduct was far from pleasing to the more ardent spirits. One of them, the venerable Sir William Dolben, member for the University of Oxford, after inspecting a slave ship in the Thames, determined to lose no time in alleviating the misery of the many living cargoes that crossed the ocean. He therefore brought in a Bill for temporarily regulating the transport of slaves in British ships. In the course of the discussions Pitt declared that, even though the proposed regulations involved the trade in ruin, as was maintained, he would nevertheless vote for them; and if the trade could not be regulated, he would vote for its abolition as "shocking to humanity, inadmissible to be carried on by any country, and which reflected the greatest dishonour on the British Senate and the British nation." He further startled the House by proposing that the regulations should become operative from that day—10th June—the hold which he had on members was shown by the division, fifty-six voting for the measure and only five against it. In the Upper House no minister save the Duke of Richmond ventured to defend this unusual enactment; and the Chancellor, Thurlow, spoke strongly against it. Sydney also opposed it, though with moderation (25th June). Pitt's feelings when he heard of their action are shown in a phrase of his letter to Grenville, dated Cambridge, 20th June, that if the Bill failed he and the opposers could not remain members of the same Cabinet. This declaration does honour to his heart and his judgement. It proves the earnestness of his feelings on the subject and his sense of the need of discipline in the Cabinet. Had the measure failed to pass the Lords, a Cabinet crisis of the gravest kind would have arisen. As it was, however, the great efforts put forth by Pitt among his

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Add. MS., 21255.